

THE U. S. SECURITY INTEREST IN KOREA

John Scott Williamson, Jr.



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THE U.S. SECURITY INTEREST  
IN KOREA

by

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THE U.S. SECURITY INTEREST  
IN KOREA

by

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Major, United States Army  
B.A., University of Washington, 1967

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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## ABSTRACT

The interests of the United States on the Korean peninsula have escalated considerably since 1945. A number of critical decisions by U.S. policy makers have further increased U.S. involvement and there can be no argument that the U.S. has been and will continue to be involved in the affairs of this Northeast Asian country. The dynamic diplomatic changes that have occurred in Asia in the past decade requires that the United States re-define their Asian interests. The U.S. has successfully deterred the North Korean military forces for the last thirty years but the time has come for a reassessment of the U.S. commitments and interests in Northeast Asia, and specifically on the Korean peninsula.



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## INTRODUCTION

The interests of the United States in Northeast Asia, and in particular, the Korean peninsula, have undergone tremendous changes and upheavals since the landing of the first American ship on the Korean coast almost one hundred years ago. This paper will attempt to analyze our past interests in the Korean peninsula, which were mainly economic and show the transition to the current situation. The fluctuations will be mirrored by the changing importance of the Korean nation(s) in United States foreign policy.

The Korean war and the events leading up to it has to be considered a watershed in U.S. foreign policy and was directly responsible for changing the basic relationship between the U.S. and the Asian nations. Therefore, some of the catalysts, namely the Truman Doctrine and Secretary Acheson's historic speech to the National Press Club will be examined in detail to ascertain what the American leaders saw as the American interests and objectives in that time period.

The major emphasis of this paper will be to analyze the current situation, along with determining the factors which comprise the United States' foreign policy in South Korea. The obvious dominant factor is to prevent renewed hostilities between the two Korean states. This is accomplished



by means of a combination of factors that our previous American Ambassador, Richard L. Sneider, calls the "deterrence equation". The principal factors of this "equation" which will be examined are: The North-South military balance, the role of the U.S. forces currently stationed on the peninsula, the role of Japan (present and future), the inter-play between China and the U.S.S.R. vying for a favorable posture between the United States and their commitments to North Korea and the role of the United Nations peace keeping machinery. Other factors which are important to American interests are the economic investments of U.S. companies and the development of the Korean economy, which is a major factor in making South Korea self-reliant. Concomitant with this is the political development of South Korea, which at this particular time is in chaos and will be given special consideration in this paper.

The concluding analysis will try to develop a series of policy choices for the United States in Northeast Asia. I stress Northeast Asia because I am of the opinion that the policies that are developed for Korea must also emphasize Japan. The future of the two nations are closely linked and American interests must be protected on a unilateral basis.



## I. AMERICAN INTERESTS IN KOREA

### HISTORICAL U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN KOREA

The first contact Americans had with the Korean nation was in 1866, when an American merchant ship, the General Sherman, sailed up the Taedong River toward Pyongyang, in direct defiance of Korea's strict policy of isolation. The General Sherman was attacked, burned and sunk, with the loss of all of its crew. This was not a very auspicious beginning and American diplomatic officials became very concerned when the ship did not return to its planned port of call. Our government then queried the Korean government as to the ship's disposition with no success. Later, upon investigation, our officials were virtually certain that a hostile Korean government had sunk her and in 1871, a mission of retribution was planned. This consisted of five gunships and a force of marines, under the command of Admiral John Rodgers. This expedition eventually landed on Kanghwa Island and met with heavy resistance. The resulting conflict left 77 Koreans killed or wounded. Then, Admiral Rodgers, who considered it foolhardy to continue with such a demonstration, re-embarked his men and returned home.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Han, Keun Woo, The History of Korea (University Press of Hawaii, 1970) p. 368.



The next expedition, which left in 1880, had a different mission. This was to try to negotiate a treaty with Korea, with respect to opening Korea up for trade and the establishment of a legation at Seoul. This expedition was commanded by Commodore Robert W. Shufeldt, who was immediately rebuffed by the Koreans and then sought the assistance of the Japanese. He was refused assistance by the Japanese, because they sought to protect their own interests in the area. Commodore Shufeldt next approached the Chinese, who were eager to provide assistance because they thought the presence of the United States in Korea would offset the growing influence of the Japanese encroachment of the Russians. With the mediation of the Chinese, a treaty was concluded and signed in 1881, with the following provisions: "Extra-territoriality for the United States' citizens, the leasing of land for a legation and residence and a most favored nation clause." The second clause in Article I was later to become the subject of considerable discussion between Korea and the United States. It stated, "If other powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their friendly feeling."<sup>2</sup> Because of this clause,

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<sup>2</sup>Donald, G. Tewksbury, Source Materials on Korean Politics and Ideologies, Vol. II. (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950), p. 4.





Korea, whose foreign policy had always been conducted on the confucian philosophy of younger brother to elder brother, not of equality between nations, came to regard the United States as her "Elder Brother".

U.S. relationships with Korea then became one of marginal interest, while the other Far East nations, namely, China, Japan and Russia sought to obtain influence over the Korean kingdom. The Korean peninsula was seen as a highly desirable pawn because of her resources, ports and geographical position in the game of Asian politics. This led to an all out war in 1894 between Japan and China, which Japan won decisively.

The next conflict to be fought was over the possession of the peninsula, which again involved Japan, but this time it was against the Russians, (1904-1905) who had become a major power in the area, and maintained a large naval presence in the area at Port Arthur and Vladivostok, but the majority of Russia's military supplies came overland via the Siberian railroad which was at this time still incomplete. The section around Lake Baikal, approximately one hundred miles, consisted of a dirt trail and Russia was, in fact, pregnant for defeat.

The Japanese had prepared long and hard for this war with a "Western" power and consequently defeated the Russians by destroying their "Pacific" and later on their "Baltic" fleets. The victories on land were not so clear



cut and in 1905 both sides were feeling the effects of the war, with shortages of money and manpower and the paralysis of pure physical exhaustion.

The Japanese, who were clearly the overall victors, , were well aware of American sympathy for their cause and approached President Roosevelt to request on his own initiative to invite the two belligerents to come together for the purpose of direct negotiation.<sup>3</sup> Russia accepted the offer and a treaty was concluded with the United States offering its good offices on 5 September 1905. This treaty, know as the "Treaty of Portsmouth", under Article I, gave a "Russian acknowledgement that Japan possessed in Korea, paramount political, military and economic interests, and engaged not to obstruct such measures as Japan might seem neccessary to take."<sup>4</sup> This was under the auspices of the United States and gave international sanction of Japan's rights in Korea.

In addition to serving as a mediator to the Portsmouth Treaty, the United States had, in July 1905, made a secret pact with Japan, regarding the future disposition of the Korean nation. This pact stated:

"...in regard to the Korean question Count Katsura observed that Korea being the direct cause of the war

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<sup>3</sup>Paul H. Clyde and Burton F. Beers, The Far East. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975,) p. 252.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 253.



with Russia, it is a matter of absolute importance to Japan that a complete solution of the peninsula question should be made as a consequence of this war. If left to herself after the war, Korea will certainly draw back to her habit of improvidently entering into any agreements or treaties with other powers, thus resuscitating the same international complications as existed before the war. In view of the foregoing circumstances, Japan feels absolutely constrained to take some definite step with a view to precluding the possibility of Korea falling back into her former condition and of placing us again under the necessity of entering upon another foreign war. William H. Taft, the Secretary of War, fully admitted the justness of the Count's observations and remarked to the effect that, in his personal opinion, the establishment by Japanese troops of a suzerainty over Korea to the extent of requiring that Korea enter into no foreign treaties without the consent of Japan was the logical result of the present war and would directly contribute to permanent peace in the East."<sup>5</sup>

President Roosevelt confirmed Taft's remarks to Count Katsura and this executive agreement in effect gave the United States sanction to the revised Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1905.

The United States, by means of this agreement, had obtained from Japan assurances that she would not turn her aggression in the direction of the Philippine Islands, and in doing so, had subordinated Korea's national interests to her own. But to the Koreans, this became known as the "first" great betrayal.

Japan continued in her objective of total dominance over Korea and on August 22, 1910, she annexed Korea and made it a part of the Japanese Empire.

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<sup>5</sup>Tyler Dennett, Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War.



Korean nationalism was mainly of a pacifist nature under the Japanese, but there were demonstrations which were put down with great brutality by the Japanese. The most important of these occurred on 1 March 1919 and is still recognized in Korea as a national holiday. This particular demonstration was encouraged by President Wilson's address to the Congress on January 9, 1918, where he enunciated his famous "Fourteen Points". To the Korean nationalists the call for self-determination and the "principle of justice to all people and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak"<sup>6</sup> was the needed encouragement to speak out against the Japanese, and this they did in a Korean Declaration of Independence. This was read to the Korean public by the thirty-three patriots who signed the declaration. Immediately afterwards, these men offered themselves up for arrest and this was the beginning of the Independence Movement, which would be suppressed over the course of the next few months with great brutality.

During this time many Korean nationals who were living in the United States petitioned President Wilson to intervene in the Korean affair. They quoted Article I of the 1882 treaty and the principles of the League of Nations.

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<sup>6</sup>Thomas P. Brockway, Basic Documents in U.S. Foreign Policy (New Jersey: Anvil Original, 1957), pp. 91-93.







President Wilson was said to be in great anguish over the plight of the Korean people, but could not help them because of the international agreements that had been concluded in good faith with Japan. This is considered by modern day Koreans as the second great betrayal.

The Japanese occupation of Korea ended on 15 August 1945, with the end of World War II. Prior to Japan's surrender, on December 1, 1943, the United States, United Kingdom and China had declared at the Cairo Conference that "the aforesaid great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent."<sup>7</sup>\* On July 26, 1945, the United States, United Kingdom, and China reaffirmed their Cairo position on Korea in the Potsdam Declaration; and, on August 8, 1945, upon its entry into the war against Japan, the Soviet Union declared its adherence to the Potsdam Declaration, and thus joined the three other participating nations in their commitment to make Korea free and independent.

Soviet troops entered Korean territory on August 9, 1945, and by August 15 had overrun all of Korea north of the thirty-eighth parallel. This division of territorial control was a military decision, which was later confirmed

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\* (See full text of this agreement at Appendix #1)

<sup>7</sup> Leland M. Goodrich, Korea (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956), Appendix p. 214.



in General MacArthur's General Order #1 of September 2, 1945, for the surrender of Japan, and was accepted by all the nations bound by the Potsdam Declaration. The occupation of Korea by the Soviets and later the United States is felt to be the third betrayal of the Korean people by the U.S. Immediately following the surrender of Japan there was in Korea a mood of jubilation and excitement, after forty years of struggle against the oppression of foreign rulers who tried to obliterate her identity and Korea was free. This feeling of exhilaration was soon to be overshadowed by internal political differences and the head-on collision between the United States and the hegemony of the Soviets.

During the period between Japan's surrender on August 14, 1945 and the beginning of American occupation on September 8, the Koreans had set up a loose provisional government which was under the leadership of leftist and anti-Japanese elements. Meanwhile, the nationalist backed exile leaders, like Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku began to arrive,<sup>8</sup> but "they had to declare that they had returned in the capacity of private citizens", for the American government under Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, who was also the Commanding General of the American forces in Korea, had made it clear in a statement published on October 25, that the "Military Government is the only government in Southern

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<sup>8</sup>George M. McCune, Korea Today (Harvard, 1950), pp. 46-47.



Korea."<sup>9</sup> This position, together with the initial stop-gap retention of Japanese administrative personnel in many positions, created friction between the military government and the Koreans, who had expected to regain independence immediately.

The American military government also made it clear that all freedom of political activity was guaranteed and that they would observe strict neutrality in all arrangements made by the various (sixty political parties existed at this time) Koreans in the process of organizing a government and holding elections.<sup>10</sup>

In the north, meanwhile, the Soviet occupation forces used a subtler line in their control of Korean territory. They hastened to set up a communist government styled after the Russian regime and led by Korean sympathizers. Cho Man Sik at first headed the Council of People's commissars, but was soon replaced by Kim Il-song. The Russians used these sympathizers to put through their own measures, with themselves staying in the background, thus giving the facade of Korean self-government.<sup>11</sup>

This arrangement of the Soviets north of the thirty-eighth and of the United States south was supposed to have been a purely temporary arrangement, until such time as a

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup>Han, History of Korea, p. 499.

<sup>11</sup>McCune, Korea Today, pp. 51-52.



Korean government could be formed and national elections held under the supervision of the United Nations. However, it soon became clear that the Russians had different plans. There were attempts to establish working arrangements with the Soviet administration in Northern Korea, but these attempts were all unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Government was making plans for Korea and on October 20, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee made a policy decision that "the present zonal military occupation of Korea by the United States and Soviet forces should be superseded at the earliest possible date by a trusteeship for Korea."<sup>12</sup> This was shocking news to the Korean people and the continued division was widely resented by the populace and demonstrations were practically continuous until the end of 1945.

On December 27, 1945, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union concluded the Moscow Agreement.\* As planned, the United States called for a trusteeship for Korea, whose mission would be to work toward a more unified administration of the country, and to implement the terms of the agreement itself. By the terms of the agreement, the trusteeship was to last for a period of five years.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Carl Berger, The Korea Knot (Philadelphia: University of Penn. Press, 1957), pp. 55-56.

<sup>13</sup>Goodrich, Korea, pp. 60-61.

\* (See Appendix #2 for an Extract of this agreement.)





The Joint Commission as called for in the Moscow Agreement began to meet on 20 March 1946, and almost immediately was at odds with the Soviets. The Commission itself proved to be unworkable and the United States on September 17, 1947, in an address before the United Nations General Assembly called that body's attention to the unresolved problems in Korea. The United Nations agreed that the Korean question was at an impasse and despite Russian objections, would attempt a solution.

The United Nations created a Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) who had the authority to travel, observe and consult in all parts of Korea, and to hold elections that would be observed by the UNTCOK team. Part of their mission was to set up an elected National Assembly according to the proportions of the population from the two zones, whose members would then be authorized to establish a national government. After a national government had been established, that government should, in consultation with UNTCOK, set up its own national security force. The national government would then take over governmental functions from the occupation armies and arrange for withdrawal of their troops, within ninety days if possible.<sup>14</sup>

The UNTCOK arrived in Korea on January 8, 1948 and tried to implement the U.N. resolution, but there was a

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<sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of State, Korea - 1945 to 1948 (Washington: Office of Public Affairs, 1948), Annexes, pp. 66-67.



lack of Soviet response and Radio Pyongyang proceeded to denounce the Commission.

UNTCOK then requested guidance from the U.N. Interim Committee who resolved, on February 26, 1948, that:

"in its view it is incumbent upon the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea, under the terms of the General Assembly resolution of 14 November 1947, and in the light of developments in the situation with Korea, since that date, to implement the programme as outlined in resolution II in such parts of Korea as are accessible to the commission."<sup>15</sup>

Under this resolution UNTCOK proceeded with elections in South Korea. The election was held and observed by UNTCOK (limited by number of official observers) and the result was a victory for the elements under Syngman Rhee.

This elected National Assembly quickly went ahead and promulgated a constitution and elected Mr. Rhee as President of the Republic of Korea on July 20.<sup>16</sup>

The United States recognized this new Korean government along with Nationalist China on August 12. The Republic of Korea was officially inaugurated on August 15, 1948, and the United States prepared to gradually withdraw its troops from the Korean peninsula.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p. 71.

<sup>16</sup>Goodrich, Korea, p. 59.



## II. AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD KOREA: 1947-1950

American interests in Korea at this time were to lay the foundations of a democratic government and then give the Korean people the opportunity to choose for themselves the style of government under which they wanted to live. The American government did this under the auspices of the United Nations, but were not successful in reuniting the whole peninsula because of the Russian-backed takeover of the North by the Communists.

The Korean people were caught between two superpowers with conflicting ideologies, namely, democracy and communism, but the Russians were better organized and had absolute goals in mind. Whereas, the Americans were more desirous of peace and did not perceive any "vital" interests at stake in Korea. Korea was more or less a "sideshow" to Europe and Japan.

After the end of World War II, the United States was recognizing that the Russians were trying to exploit the weakened condition of the defeated countries. Soviet power was firmly entrenched in Eastern Europe and now the Communists were trying to make inroads into Greece and Turkey. It was under these conditions that President Truman addressed Congress in March of 1947, in which he stated:



"One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations... We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free people to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States."<sup>18</sup>\*

It was as a result of this doctrine coupled with the Marshall Plan and an article by Mr. X (George Kennan) that America's leaders and the attentive public made the transition from collaboration with the Soviets to containment, as the underlying principle in U.S.-Soviet relations.<sup>19</sup>

The South Korean people put great faith in President Truman's statements and were acutely disappointed when the United Nations was unable to unify Korea. Nevertheless, core policy of the United Nations and the United States still envisioned a unified, stable and independent Korea

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\* (Complete text at Appendix #3)

<sup>18</sup> John D. Endicott and Roy W. Stafford, Jr., Eds., American Defense Policy, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977) pp. 60-61.

<sup>19</sup> Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision, (New York: The Free Press, 1968) p. 66.





with a representative government, and a growing economy that would be oriented toward the Free World.<sup>20</sup>

Despite declarations of support for the Republic of Korea, statements and actions of our leaders and Congress in early 1950 gave the impression to the international community that we were not altogether behind the government of South Korea. The major facts that illustrate this weakening American support are U.S. troop withdrawal and Secretary Acheson's (infamous) speech made before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on January 12, 1950. In this speech\* Secretary Acheson commented on military security in the Pacific and establishing a defense perimeter which "runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus."<sup>21</sup> This completely excluded Korea from the defensive perimeter of the United States. In addition, when he mentioned Korea, he reinforced the notion that Korea was outside this perimeter of military action by noting that we had ended our military occupation of that country.

Extracts from that speech illustrate how the world community could have perceived our military intentions

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<sup>20</sup>Andrew C. Nahm, Korea and the New Order in East Asia, (Western Michigan University, 1975) p.95.

\*(Extract of text at Appendix #4.)

<sup>21</sup>Department of State Bulletin, Crisis in Asia, (Office of Public Affairs, January 23, 1950) p. 116.



negatively. Secretary Acheson went on to explain:

So far as the military security of other areas of the Pacific is concerned it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack. But it must also be made clear that such a guarantee is hardly sensible or necessary within the realm of practical relationship.

Should such an attack occur - one hesitates to say where such an attack would come from - the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression. But it is a mistake, I think, in considering Pacific and Far Eastern problems to become obsessed with military considerations. Important as these are, there are other problems that press, and these other problems are not capable of solution through military means. These other problems arise out of susceptibility of many areas, and many countries of the Pacific area, to subversion and penetration. That cannot be stopped by military means.<sup>22</sup>

The perception of the international community had to note this military deemphasis by no means indicated a denial of continuing general interest. In the same speech, Secretary Acheson later emphasized:

We have given that nation (Korea) great help in getting itself established. We are asking Congress to continue this help until it is firmly established, and that legislation is now pending before Congress. The idea that we should scrap all of that, that we should stop halfway through the achievement of the establishment of this country, seems to me to be the most utter defeatism and utter madness in our interests in Asia.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, p. 117.



The legislation that was pending before the Congress was a \$60 million supplemental Korean aid bill that was before the House. A week later, on 19 January, 1950, the House of Representatives defeated the measure by a vote of 192 to 191.<sup>24</sup> This major setback to an aggressive American foreign policy in regards to the Korean peninsula, was a major factor in creating the perception that the United States, at that time completely concerned by the rise of Mao Tse-tung in China, would not come to the military defense of the ROK in case of a "hot" war.

In the meantime, in defiance of the United Nations resolution, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was formed in September 1948. The Soviets almost immediately began to arm this new Republic and on 25 June, 1950, the DPRK attacked, without warning or declaration of war, the Republic of Korea.

It must be noted that there still remains much controversy as to "how" the war started. I.F. Stone in his book, The Hidden History of the Korean War, is at variance with the official UNCOK-US version on almost every point. Mr. Stone suggests that because of the weakening stance of America's foreign policy in Korea, Syngman Rhee deliberately provoked the North by attacking first.

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<sup>24</sup> Paige, Korean Decision, p. 66.



Rhee was hoping that the North would retaliate in force, requiring the United States to involve itself, because failure to do so would have markedly weakened the prestige and position of the United States in the Cold War. After all, the Republic of Korea had been a product of US-USSR-UN policy. Not to have defended Korea in the opinion of President Truman, would have been considered appeasement of Communists, especially among the nations opposed to communist expansion. Mr. Stone's analysis holds little credibility for anyone associated with military planning. The sheer logistics of planning a successful military operation, on any scale, much less a major invasion, requires extensive planning and preparation to be successful. It is obvious by the sequence of events following June 25th, that the North Koreans had accomplished the required planning and that the fuel, ammunition, rations and vehicles to sustain such an attack were in place and in a high state of readiness.

I will conclude the historical summary of U.S. involvement in Korea with a brief analysis of the American decision to intervene in Korea. To do this we must try to make an assessment of the motives behind the North Korean attack. Generally, these five following interpretations are put forward:

1. The "Diversionary Move" Interpretation. American policy-makers were concerned at this time about the possibility of a series of Communist actions throughout the world,





but not an attack on South Korea. Therefore, it was suspected that the attack on the R.O.K. was merely a "diversion" or side issue in Russia's (not Chua's) expansion.

2. The "Soft-Spot Probing" Interpretation. It was the State Department's consensus that the North Korean attack was in actuality a "feeling out" and the U.S. position, which, if indicators were correct, acted on the assumption that South Korea was not a strategic place to stand up against the Soviets.

3. The "Testing" Interpretation. The implication here, was that if the anti-communist forces failed to resist the North Korean attack, then further Communist aggression would occur throughout the world.

4. The "Demonstration" Interpretation. This interpretation, the Soviets' intentions were to demonstrate their own strength and show the weakness of allies.

5. "Soviet Far East Strategy" Interpretation. This interpretation follows the thesis of John Foster Dulles, who believed that the North Korean attack was partially motivated by the desire to block American efforts to make Japan a member of the Western camp and to pave the way for further Communist expansion in the Far East.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Alexander L. George, "American Foreign Policymaking and the North Korean Aggression," World Politics Vol. VII, No. 2 (January, 1955), pp. 211-215.



The various interpretations noted above not only attributes different intentions to the Soviet move in North Korea, but contains several various implications for American foreign policy in reacting to the Communist aggression.

What is disturbing is that in researching and analyzing the various factors which attributed to the war, there was at that time a distinct lack of attention given to the Chinese role in Asia. Here was a country with a huge resource of people and vast numbers of newly acquired military equipment, who was also Communist, and had a large contiguous border with North Korea. Surely, Kim Il-sung and Chairman Mao had discussed and planned a Korean "liberation" in conjunction with the Soviet planners. The Chinese seem to have become critically involved as danger grew to the majority of their natural resources and their industrial complexes are located in Manchuria, directly above North Korea. The American planners were obviously more concerned with the hegemony of the Soviet Union, than in the vital interests of China.

The Korean War represented a climactic confrontation between the Communists and the Free World. The communist countries had seen that the United States would react swiftly and decisively to outright communist aggression. The United States also learned that its objectives and policies could not be obtained without an adequate



defensive structure. Therefore, after the fighting, a U.S.-R.O.K. Mutual Defense Treaty was promulgated and signed in Washington, D.C. on October 1, 1953. The treaty promised U.S. action in "the event of an armed attack against the territory which has been recognized by the United States as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the R.O.K., and that each party will act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes."<sup>26</sup>

It is under the auspices of this document that a substantial number of U.S. soldiers, 39,000 in 1980, have been stationed on the peninsula at our discretion for close to thirty years. The debacle of the war in Vietnam has made the U.S. take a new look at its Asian commitments and interests. This process of self-examination has not produced a new policy for Asia, but it has produced pressures for withdrawing American ground forces from South Korea. The major rationale for the positioning of these American forces has been the maintenance of a North/South strategic balance and the deterrence of future hostilities.

The United States has several areas of interests in Korea, but the major ones have to be security, economic and political. Each of these subjects requires a major analysis to understand U.S. policies and objectives in Korea.

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<sup>26</sup>Hearings Before the U.S. Senate on Foreign Relations on the Mutual Defense Treaty with Korea. (Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 12.



Therefore, this paper will approach each area as a separate entity for analysis.





### III. U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS IN KOREA

The prospects for security and stability on the Korean peninsula requires at a minimum, deterrence of the North Korean forces. This is a most formidable task because North Korea has the fifth largest standing army in the world.<sup>27</sup> The crucial question then becomes, how large of a force is necessary and how much risk does this impose upon the United States? These are not easy questions to answer and the answers would have to contain several components; such as, a comparison of the order of battle of North and South Korea; the role and strength of the U.S. forces; the influence and possible support North Korea has from the Soviet Union and China; the role of Japan and the continuing participation of the United Nations.

The perception of North Korea in regards to our capabilities and our will to fight becomes a major consideration in the deterrence equation. Has the Nixon Doctrine, the communist victory in Vietnam, our abrogation of the Republic of China Treaty, our well publicized withdrawal plans and the political upheavals in South Korea weighted the equation in North Korea's favor? This is an unanswerable question, but one that needs consideration. The

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<sup>27</sup>Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) June 22, 1977, p. 48.



equation has taken many shifts since the stalemate that ended the war in 1953. North Korea has steadily outspent the South, especially during the years of 1967 through 1971, when North Korea spent almost one-third of its national budget on military expenditures as compared to 16.5% for the South. However, the South hit a crossover point in 1975\*, because of its expanding industrial base and GNP and has since been able to outspend the North.

Deterrence may be achieved on the peninsula at low levels of U.S. military strength if the North considers that the end result of involving the United States makes the costs of aggression too great. This seems to be the status quo situation, which has been achieved since 1953, despite the fluctuations in the equation. The continuing build-up of South Korea's defensive capabilities and the concomitant reduction of U.S. forces, such as the withdrawal of the 7th Division in 1971, seems to indicate a further reduction of U.S. presence in the near future.

President Carter, in his election campaign in 1975, had promised a withdrawal of combat forces from South Korea and subsequently in 1978, began to withdraw units from the 2nd Infantry Division, stationed north of Seoul. At this time, military planners felt that "the growing South Korean capacity to defend itself made it possible for the U.S. to

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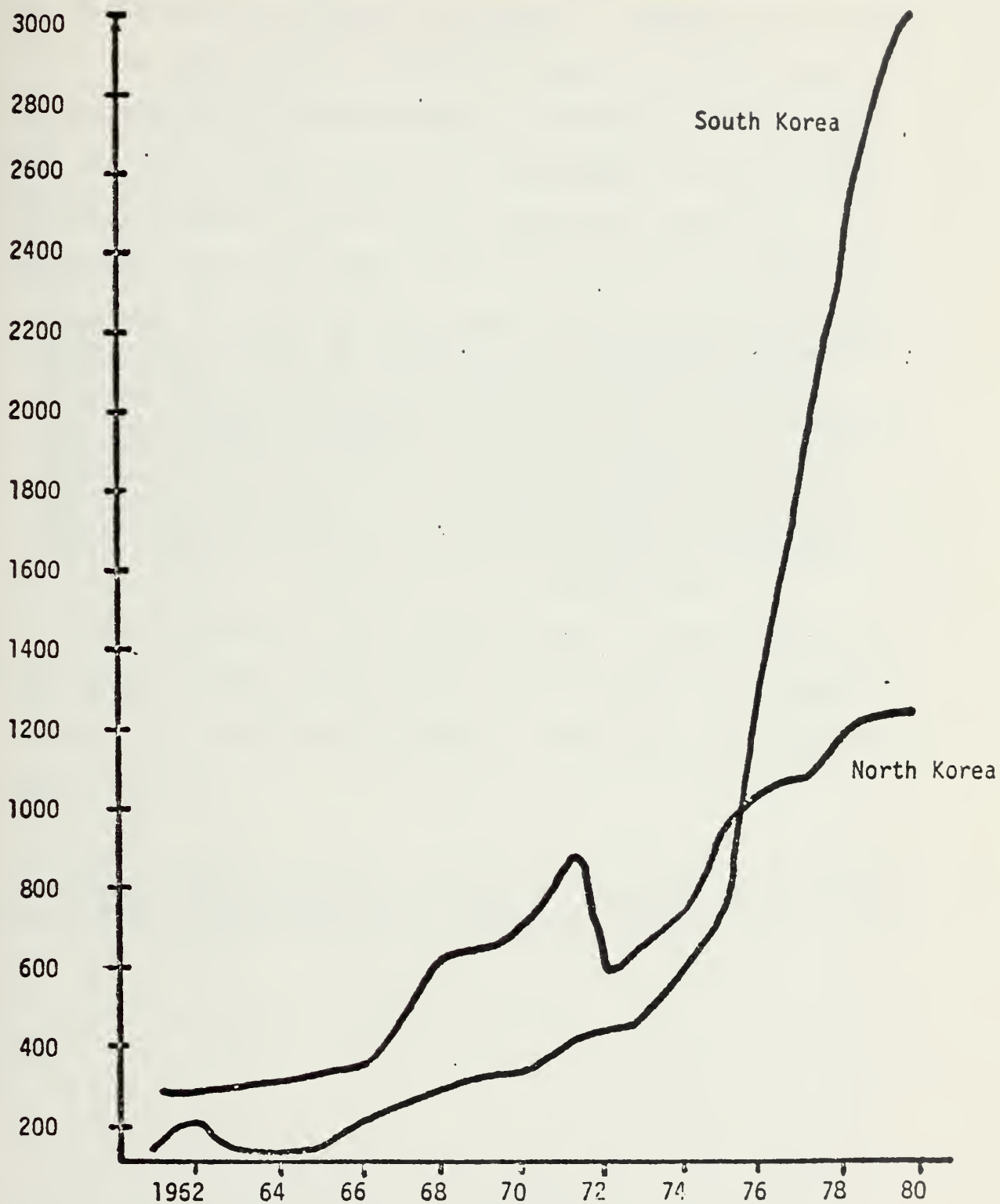
\* (See Chart #1)



Chart 1

\$ US million

Comparative Military Expenditures 1961-1979



Source: Richard P. Cassidy, "Arms Transfers and Security Assistance to the Korean Peninsula, 1945-1980." (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1980), p. 305.



begin withdrawing its ground forces from Korea in 1978 and to complete this withdrawal by 1980."<sup>28</sup> However, in early 1979, the intelligence community began to revise sharply upward the North Korean number of men under arms and numbers of major weapon systems. The number of North Korean divisions jumped from 25 to 41 (including separate brigades) and their tank assets from 2,000 to 2,600+.

"How much of this re-assessment was due to new information, to a review of old data or to increased intelligence effort was not clear; certainly some of the figures that were being quoted had been on offer in the intelligence community for some time, notably from sources in Seoul, but had previously been discounted. Suspicion was rife that this was an attempt by the Pentagon to influence the debate about the wisdom of the withdrawal plan, or even that they were being provided to make it easier for the President to go back on his plan or to modify it if he wanted to."

The skepticism is now a moot point, because the new figures have been substantiated by increased intelligence efforts (U-2 overflights) and the withdrawal was halted by the President.

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<sup>28</sup>The Defense Monitor, Center for Defense Information, Washington, D.C., Vol. 5, #1, January, 1976.





#### IV. THE NORTH-SOUTH MILITARY BALANCE

The military strength of North Korea has been the dominant feature in the military equation for the last three decades. The huge amounts of men and material the North puts into the war preparation effort is not reflective of a defensive posture, but is of a strong offensive configuration. The production of significantly higher numbers of modern river crossing equipment and the ordering of 8,000 scuba outfits from Japan during the 1970s also indicates an offensive threat. Only in the attack would such equipment be required for hasty river crossings of the Imjin River and the Han estuary.

Both countries indigenously produce significant amounts of military hardware. South Korea's defense industries produce howitzers, rifles, small caliber ammunition, small displacement ships, mortars, rocket launchers, Vulcan air defense systems and a limited range surface missile, which was recently tested. Nearly fifty percent of all of South Korea's military equipment is of U.S. manufacture, which keeps South Korea dependent on the U.S. for spare parts and equipment.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>SIPRI yearbooks 1977, 1978, 1979, "Foreign Military Markets," Defensive Marketing Services, (Greenwich: DMS, 1979), South Korea Summary, p. 17.



Currently, the North has a clear-cut advantage in the scale of its defense industry. Except for the most sophisticated items, such as aircraft, electronic equipment and missiles, the North has the capacity to equip its naval and ground forces with large numbers of tanks, APCs, mobile artillery and small arms. The North has also put underground almost all of its industrial, naval and especially its air facilities.<sup>30</sup> This has created another vast swing in the overall equation. As Major General George J. Keegan, Jr., USAF (Ret.) states in a letter to the editor of Aviation Week and Space Technology (October 31, 1977) that:

"...North Korea - like the Soviet Union - has built one of the most extensive underground military and civil defense capabilities anywhere in the world. Having been ravaged by retaliatory air attacks of the Korean War, North Korea has taken extraordinary pains to harden and protect every target in the country. Submarines and ships are now protected in vast underground shelters. Tactical aircraft are now protected by tough shelters, and virtually indestructable hangars built into nearly mountainsides at virtually all of North Korea's important air bases. In fact, such shelters now protect virtually all of the important air, ground and naval combat units of the North Korean armed forces, in addition to all important commands, communication, supply, weapons, and production centers...North Korean military target systems today are beyond the capabilities of U.S. conventional or nuclear weapons to destroy or damage severely. It will matter little that U.S. air and naval units are in the Western Pacific to reinforce South Korea. The fact of the

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<sup>30</sup> Richard H. Solomon, Ed., Asian Security in the 1980s: Problems and Policies for a Time of Transition. (Rand Corporation, November 1979), p. 120.



matter is that even with the most modern weapons, such forces are powerless to redress the severe imbalance posed by the North Korean military and civil defense hardening measures. The North Korean forces today are virtually immune to the best U.S. weapons systems, be they air, ground or naval. These are hardly stabilizing elements."

Major General Keegan's comments are quite enlightening, but even if these military targets are virtually indestructible, there still have to be airstrips, access roads and bridges which would be within our capability to destroy. But the deterrence equation does become heavily weighted in North Korea's favor if in fact, she is an underground nation.

The North's continuing emphasis on military production and procurement has also sustained the commanding lead that the DPRK built up in the 1960s in sheer numbers of military equipment. The following table illustrates this point:



TABLE 1  
MILITARY FORCE BALANCE COMPARISON<sup>31</sup>

	1970		1977	
	Republic of Korea	North Korea	Republic of Korea	North Korea
Personnel				
Active forces	634,000	400,000	600,000	520,000
Reserve forces	1,000,000	1,200,000	3,000,000	2,000,000
Maneuver divisions	19	20	19	25
Ground balance				
Tanks	900	600	1,100 <sup>a</sup>	2,000
APC	300	120	400 <sup>a</sup>	750 <sup>a</sup>
Assault guns	0	300	0	105 <sup>a</sup>
Anti-tank	NA <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	24,000
Shelling capability				
Artillery/multiple rocket launchers	1,750	3,300	2,000 <sup>a</sup>	4,335 <sup>a</sup>
Surface to surface missiles (battalions)	NA	NA	1	2-3
Mortars	NA	NA	NA	9,000
Air balance				
Jet combat aircraft	230	555	320 <sup>a</sup>	600
Other military aircraft	35 <sup>a</sup>	130	200	400
AAA guns	850	2,000	2,000 <sup>a</sup>	5,500 <sup>a</sup>
SAMs (battalions/sites)	NA	NA	2	40-45
Navy Combat vessels	60	190	90-100	450-475

Source: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Troop Withdrawal from the Republic of Korea, January 9, 1978, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1978.

<sup>a</sup>These are approximations; actual figures may be greater.

<sup>b</sup>NA = not available.

<sup>31</sup>Source: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "U.S. Troop Withdrawal from the Republic of Korea, January 9, 1978," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1978.





The North in 1970 had established itself as being numerically superior in all categories of military equipment. The only category where there was a shortfall was in the number of active forces and reserve forces. The DPRK had made substantial inroads in this area by 1977, even with the distinct disadvantages of having less than one half of South Korea's population, (17,580,00 versus 37,760,000). The latest intelligence figures are illustrated in Table 2 below and show clearly the dominance of the DPRK forces.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Ground, Air and Naval Forces, 1979<sup>32</sup>

Component Ground Forces	North Korea	Republic of Korea
Active Duty personnel	700,000*	520,000
Combat Divisions	35	17
Motorized Inf. Divs.	3	0
Armor	2	1
Separate Infantry Brigades	4	2
Separate Armor Regiments	5	2
Light Infantry Brigades	6-8	0
Paramilitary/militia	2,500,000	2,800,000
Medium Tanks	2,150*	860
Light/Amphibious Tanks	150	0
Assault Guns	100	0
APCs	800	520
Field Artillery pieces	3,500	2,104
Multiple Rocket Launchers	1,300	0
Mortars	9,000	5,300
Infantry Anti-Tank weapons	24,000	11,000
AAA weapons	5,500	700
SAM sites	38-40	80

\* figures reflect 1970 data obtained from various unclassified sources.

<sup>32</sup>Sources: The Military Balance 1979-1980, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), p. 68. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C.



(TABLE 2 cont'd)

Component Ground Forces	North Korea	Republic of Korea
<hr/>		
<u>Naval Forces</u>		
Personnel	27,000	47,000
Bases	18	8
Total combat ships	425-456	104
Patrol frigates		
Missile AHK boats	18(styx)	8(harpoon)
Coastal patrol	300	23
Amphibious craft	90	22
Submarines	15	0
<u>Air Force</u>		
Personnel	45,000	32,000
Combat aircraft	565	254
Bombers	IL-28 85	0
Fighters	SU-7 20	18 F-4D
	Mig 15/17/19 340	19 F-4E
		135 F-5E/F
		50 F-86
		12 RF-5A
		20 S-2F
Transport	251	34
AN-2	200	12 C-46
AN-24	40	10 C-54
IL-14/18	10	10 C-123
TU-154	1	2 H5-748
Helicopters	60	54
Missiles	AA-2 Atoll AAM SA-2 250 (3 SAM Bdes)	Sidewinder, sparrow, Reserves: 55,000
	On order: Rumor has it that DPRK will re- ceive 18 Mig-23s in 1980.	On Order: 18 F-4E, 14 F-5E, 24 OV-10G, 6 C130-H tpts, 6 C4-47C, 50 Hughes 500 MD, 27 UH-1 hel, AIM-9L Super side- winder AAM, Mavarick ASM.



Intelligence sources and press reports indicate that some of the above figures might be low and they assess the North with more armor - 2600 tanks and well over 1000 APCs, and more multiple rocket launchers. In addition, the DPRK has lowered the draft age to 16 and is accredited with a substantially larger number of reserves.<sup>33</sup>

Taken as a whole picture, North Korea is probably the most mobilized nation in the world. Her forces are configured largely for offensive operations, and her homeland is essentially safe and secure. Besides the obvious advantages of quantity, the North has several other military advantages over the South. The North has the advantage of surprise and will be able to concentrate her attacking forces. The North also has to penetrate only thirty miles to capture the political and industrial center of South Korea, and since her allies are both located on contiguous borders the logistic problem becomes in a protracted war, less severe.

The South is very cognizant of these advantages and has taken steps to nullify them. First of all, since there are only limited corridors of attack, the South has turned the areas north of Seoul into a "mini" Maginot line, with several hundred kilometers of highly sophisticated "defense

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<sup>33</sup>Sam Jameson, "U.S. Believes N. Korean Troops Out-number the South's," Los Angeles Times, July 16, 1979, Sec 1-A, p. 1-2.



wall" and associated fortifications. The defense wall's main purpose is to block the North Korean tanks from the major avenues of approach, so that they can be held in place and systematically destroyed. The South has tailored her armed forces into mainly a defensive posture and there is a Clausewitzian doctrine that advocates a ratio of 2 to 1 in an attack.<sup>34</sup> If the South's fortifications are added into this doctrine the North Koreans would need a 3 to 1 ratio to be successful, but there is an old military saying that any position can be taken if the attacker is willing to pay the price.

The South has a qualitatively superior air force and a large portion of her armed forces has accumulated extensive combat experience in Vietnam. However, the major factor that contributes to balancing the equation is the continued presence of U.S. forces.

#### U.S. Force Levels

Currently, there are approximately 39,000 American troops stationed in Korea. The major unit is the 2nd Infantry Division which is positioned north of Seoul on one of the major invasion corridors. It is currently short one battalion, which was withdrawn in 1978, but as late as 1979 it was still at division strength due to KATUSA (Korean

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<sup>34</sup>William J. Barnds, Ed., The Two Koreas in East Asian Affairs (New York: New York University Press, 1976), p. 145.





Augmentation to the U.S. Army) augmentation. Other units which make up the balance of U.S. forces in Korea are the 314th Air Division, Army missile and defense commands and logistic, intelligence, communications and combat support units. In wartime, all of these units would be under the command of the Combined Forces Command (CFC), which is an all service and integrated headquarters. Upon mobilization, CFC would also draw upon forces from the 3.5 million ROK reserve. The missions of CFC are:

- '1. To provide credible deterrence to prevent armed aggression or adventurism from outside of the Republic;
2. should deterrence fail, to defeat the aggressor force."<sup>35</sup>

The deterrence mission of the United States is performed by stationing the U.S. combat forces in a "forward" position, where they perform the function of a "tripwire." The value of this U.S. division is not in its fighting capabilities, but that it serves as a warning to the North Koreans that any attack would invariably involve American troops. It also signifies to the North and South that Americans are willing to live up to their treaty commitment to take action against an external aggressor in accordance with their constitutional processes.

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<sup>35</sup>General John A. Wickham, Jr., CINC, UNC, Korea, "The Korean Peninsula: In Transition," Defense 80, May, 1980, p.20.



Any total or precipitate withdrawal of U.S. forces from the peninsula, particularly the 2nd Infantry Division, would probably give the wrong signal to the North, as it did in 1950. To preclude this from happening again, the United States has followed a policy of a phased and selective re-deployment to make it explicitly clear to the North and South Koreans that such limited measures as these are by no means tantamount to abandonment or are even a re-assessment of our national interest on the Korean peninsula. The United States must continue to be especially careful not to give the North Koreans cause or excuse for miscalculation of America's intent.

The fundamental question for the U.S. is what commitment of American forces to the Korean peninsula is the most effective for the protection of U.S. national interests as they are challenged all over the world? What level of troops are best and how long should they remain?

The U.S. leadership recognizes the need for maintaining a strong military presence on the Korean peninsula as recently noted by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown in his recent DOD Annual Report for FY 1981, in which he says:

"Faced with these dangers, we have honored our pledge of 1977 to maintain our military strength in Asia. We have, in fact, somewhat increased our forces above the level we had previously planned. By the end of 1978, we had withdrawn one battalion from the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea, but any further withdrawal of combat elements from the division will be held in abeyance until 1981. At that time we will consider whether a satisfactory North-South balance has been



restored, and whether there has been tangible progress toward a reduction of tensions on the peninsula... I have also emphasized that the United States must retain the flexibility to move its forces--principally naval and air units--where needed, and that this flexibility to 'swing' forces in no way discriminates against Asia."

Secretary Brown makes it clear to the Asian community that U.S. needs and interests come first, but that we can be counted upon to honor our treaty commitments and will continue to give the stability of Northeast Asia high priority.

### Role of Japan

Japan is in the unique position of being considered a major power, but with a distinct lack of military power to back up her international position. The Korean situation then becomes of paramount importance to the Japanese, whose main interest is to reduce North-South tensions and to prevent another Korean War. Japan's broader interest in the area is one of avoidance and preservation of the status quo. Japan cannot afford to antagonize any of the super-powers in the area and especially avoids conflicts with China and Russia.

History has an important part to play in Japan's relationships with the two Koreas, because of her long and sometimes brutally enforced colonization of the Korean peninsula from 1910 through 1945. There still remains much bitterness among the older Koreans, who were forced to



have Japanese names and were not allowed to use the Korean language. Even now, there exists a strong love-hate relationship between Japan and Korea. In fact, a normalization treaty was not signed between the two countries until 1965 and even then there was much dissent from the Korean public.

The Japanese view toward the Korean peninsula is one of permanent anxiety. For the moment, they lean strongly toward the South, primarily because of the large economic investment which is subsidized by the continued presence of U.S. forces. The major Japanese concern is that the unstable situation in the South could cause the United States or North Korea to react in an impulsive manner and embroil Japan in a physical or political conflict with China or the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup>

The impending withdrawal of American forces from the peninsula requires the Japanese government to reassess their security measures, which are meagre if compared with the other nations in Northeast Asia. If the Japanese feel that the continued presence of U.S. forces is necessary, they are reluctant to say so because Washington would then pressure the Japanese to share the "burden" for Korea's defense. Therefore, Japan will continue to support the status quo

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<sup>36</sup>Franklin B. Weinstein, Ed., U.S.-Japan Relations and the Security of East Asia (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978), p. 207.





and will seek to preserve the only item they consider "essential" to their security. That is the treaty with the United States.<sup>37</sup>

### Chinese Perceptions and Interests

China's role in Korea stems from her active support of the DPRK, when the North Korean army was almost destroyed in late 1950. Chinese involvement in the Korean War has long been a subject for conjecture and many historians cite the war as being the major catalyst of the Sino-Soviet split. The most important and enlightening study has been Robert Simmons' The Strained Alliance: Peking, Pyongyang, Moscow and the Politics of the Korean Civil War.<sup>38</sup> In this book Simmons states that:

"The usual interpretation of China's entrance into the Korean Civil War has been that it was done cautiously, in an effort to protect the Manchurian frontier. While this is obviously correct, it is also an insufficient explanation of the circumstances and the causes of China's crossing the Yalu. These can only be fully found in the interrelationship between the three communist allies. It was the Soviet Union's reticence which finally prompted China's intervention. [China] entered the war not only when it seemed that the United States was actually threatening her territory, but also, and equally important, when it became obvious that Russia would steadfastly refuse to use her troops on the peninsula to protect China from an American incursion which was using the Korean peninsula as an invasion corridor. China's hopes for a successful military alliance with the Soviet Union was then negated..."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 203.

<sup>38</sup> New York: Free Press, 1975.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 168



Whatever China's reasons for entering the war, she paid a high price for her involvement. She lost the opportunity to "liberate" Taiwan and was labeled an "aggressor" and consequently was denied diplomatic recognition by a large segment of the international community.

Today, China gives great importance to her relationship with Pyongyang. The reasons for this are varied, but primarily stem from China, by virtue of being the weak sister in the Sino-Soviet dispute, must keep Korea on her side, because without the DPRK, China would stand alone in Asia confronting the Soviet Union. Moreover, a pro-Soviet Pyongyang would pose an enormous security threat to China's military-industrial centers in Manchuria.

Yet, despite North Korea's strategic importance to China, Peking lacks the sophisticated military equipment and the economic wherewithall to meet Pyongyang's extensive needs. China has been stepping up her efforts to provide Pyongyang with economic support, mainly with cheap oil. But she cannot provide the modern weaponry that North Korea will increasingly need as the South builds up its military capabilities, especially in the coming years, when Pyongyang's military superiority may vanish.<sup>40</sup> The result of North Korea being a more "vital interest to Peking than Moscow,

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<sup>40</sup>Hong Yung Lee, "Korea's Future: Peking's Perspective," Asian Survey, Vol. XV No. 12, December 1975, pp. 1091-1092.



China must placate the North Koreans with rhetoric and must appear to support Kim Il-sung's plan for "Peaceful Reunification of Korea."

China obviously has the advantages of culture and racial closeness with the North Koreans over the Russians, but her rapprochement with the United States and Japan has caused some concern among the North Korean leadership. Peking has tried to reassure Pyongyang with increased military and economic aid, but to what extent Pyongyang has been placated is uncertain.<sup>41</sup>

Currently, Pyongyang seems to tilt toward China's side of the spectrum, but this is probably a transitory state and Kim Il-sung will keep playing off Peking against Moscow. Kim Il-sung's major concern is to keep North Korea self-reliant and independent as possible and to prevent domination by either of the two communist giants.

The Chinese government officially denounces the presence of U.S. troops on the peninsula, but unofficially opposes our withdrawal from the area. The reasons for this are two-fold: first of all our withdrawal would not be conducive to continued stability in the area which the Chinese are also interested in preserving, and secondly, it might present the Soviets with an opportunity to increase their influence vis

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<sup>41</sup>Ralph N. Clough, Deterrence and Defense in Korea (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1976), p. 41.



a vis China, by creating conditions where the North might perceive a need for more advanced weapon systems, as a result of our extensive refurbishing of the Korean army. If this were the case the Soviets would require concessions from the North, such as they recently received in their MIG-23 transaction, where they reportedly obtained use of the facilities at Najin Harbor, which is located close to the Soviet port of Vladivostok.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, talk of a U.S. withdrawal from the Korean peninsula "upsets" the Chinese, who are in favor of maintaining a "Status Quo" situation.

#### Soviet Interests in North Korea

North Korea is one of the few countries of the world which has been able to assert their own independence after having been firmly entrenched as a Soviet "satellite." It is known that Kim Il-sung was Josef Stalin's personal choice for the leadership position in North Korea, because "he was a limited man, a guerilla rather than a political animal and this was regarded by Stalin as someone he could trust."<sup>43</sup>

The Korean War enhanced Kim Il-sung's power base, especially after the Chinese entered the war with huge numbers

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<sup>42</sup>FEER, 1980, p. 211.

<sup>43</sup>Robert Shaplen, A Turning Wheel (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 272.





of troops. It was at this point Kim Il-sung became very annoyed with the Soviets, because after the initial build-up of his army, very little additional support was given and Kim Il-sung decided to emulate what he considered as the best aspects of the two conflicting communist ideologies.<sup>44</sup>

Since Kim Il-sung's pulling away from the Soviet camp, there have existed periods of improving relations, but also periods of relative "coolness".

The Soviet's major interest in Korea is to prevent its domination by any other power. Its current attitude seems to be only a reflection of its relationship with the other major powers with interests in Korea. The USSR will react to keep China from gaining too much influence and until the recent United States condemnation of her invasion of Afghanistan was very concerned with maintaining detente and keeping the SALT negotiations alive. Now with SALT II having been eliminated as a viable course of action, and detente obviously at a new low, the Soviet Union could choose to escalate the tensions in Northeast Asia. How could Russia increase the level of anxiety of the other powers and still keep her risks to a minimum? Her most productive policy choice would be to sell to the DPRK, at reduced prices, sophisticated military equipment, which the North has been needing for several years, which in turn would extend the

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid, p. 273.



length of time that the North was the clearly dominant military power. This would have the effect of upsetting the military balance on the peninsula and would require South Korea to invest more capital into her military-industrial complex, thereby creating more inflation. This would eventually manifest itself into more dissatisfaction and social unrest. The presence of substantial numbers of Mig 23-25s and T-72 tanks would also have the effect of causing great amounts of consternation and anxiety among the major powers on the peninsula and would, in my opinion, draw the North into a much closer relationship with the U.S.S.R.

China would also be forced to respond with increased economic and military aid, which could endanger her successful reapproachment with the United States. A strong USSR program of aid and development to the DPRK would require China to eventually make a choice between her "newly" formed relationship with the United States or an all out retrenchment with the DPRK. China has already lost one such contest vis a vis the Soviets in Vietnam, Is North Korea next?

If the Soviets did increase their aid programs and sold sophisticated weapon systems to the North, the United States would probably respond by announcing a continuation of U.S. ground forces for the next five years or so. This would also be in the Soviet favor. They privately support the "two" Koreas concept and feel the Korean question should be solved



in the same manner as the German question.<sup>45</sup> That is, a formal recognition by the great powers of North and South Korea as separate entities. This would continue the stability of the status quo, but the sale of weapon systems and increased aid would increase the Soviet influence over the North, and exacerbate "cold war" tensions in the area.

### The Overall Equation

Any assessment of the physical military balance in Korea leaves North Korea with the advantage. However, neither side has the confidence in its ability to conquer the other side, in a war without external support. The main advantage in either case would be with the defender, who would have the additional edge of in place fortifications, minefield, weapon systems and preplanned fire support. This rough strategic balance or what may be called "essential equivalence" is only possible with the presence of American support forces at this time. The United States' immediate concern should be to ensure that the balance between the two nations remains relatively stable, with the long range goal (5 or more years or ult 1985) of achieving "parity" for the South with gradual removal of all U.S. forces.

The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons also has its effect, if only in a psychological manner, upon the North Korean

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<sup>45</sup>Barnds, p. 39.



leadership, but is it essential? I would suggest that they are of limited utility because the North does not have nuclear weapons, therefore, they do not serve as any sort of deterrence except against conventional forces. The spectrum of the U.S., even using tactical nukes against a non-nuclear country which is also within "spitting distance" of the U.S.S.R. and China (see chart below) is illusionary at best.

Distances Between Key Locations  
in Northeast Asia

	(Miles)
Seoul-Tokyo	720
Seoul-Pyongyang	120
Seoul-Chinese Border	250-300
Seoul-DMZ	30
Vladivostok-Pyongyang	440
Seoul-Soviet Border	400
Seoul-Korea Straits	300
Seoul-San Francisco	5650 <sup>46</sup>

There really is no prima facie military requirement for nuclear weapons to be deployed in South Korea and their presence creates a dependency on such weaponry in the minds of the South Korean leadership. The best thing that can be said in favor of their deployment in South Korea is that it reduces the ROK's incentive to acquire nuclear weaponry<sup>47</sup>

The relative levels of military strength of the two Koreas is dependent upon their overall level of economic

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<sup>46</sup>Defense Monitor, p.7.

<sup>47</sup>Leslie H. Brown, "American Security Policy in Asia," Adelphi Papers (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1977), p. 31.





progress. In this, the South has the greater advantage in a rapidly expanding industrial and technological base. The future of South Korea remains hitched to her economic star, which will be examined now as one of the major variables affecting the overall balance on the peninsula.



## V. ECONOMIC

The development of an independent, democratic, economically free South Korea has been the focus of American policy for over three decades. We can claim success in two of these categories. In particular, the "economic miracle" on the Han River has to rank as one of the most outstanding success stories of international development. Is this success story over? Have the rising costs of oil, labor, inflation and the spectre of political instability ended Korea's growth as an independent and self-sufficient economy? To answer these questions and to understand where the future of Korea's economy lies, we must look at the historical foundation and development of that economy.

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The growth of Korea's economy started off very slowly after the Korean War and the reconstruction growth that did occur at that time can be attributed to aid received from the United States and the United Nations. Despite these large capital inflows of foreign assistance in the post war period, rapid inflation was the major problem in the domestic economy. The annual rate of inflation declined to 25-28 percent in 1953-54, from a high of 531 percent in 1951. In 1956, when the annual rate was about 31 percent, the government agreed



with the United States aid mission to implement a financial stabilization program beginning in late 1957. The effort to stabilize the economy was directed mainly to the money supply. The first target of this campaign was the large government deficit which was a major source of expansion.

With this monetary stabilization program, the government was able to reduce the annual growth of the money supply to a 20 percent level in 1957 from 62 percent in 1955.<sup>48</sup>

The industrial policies at this time were inward looking and a major effort was being put forth to reconstruct the industrial base destroyed during the war. The government was maintaining very high tariffs to protect its infant industries and some export promotion measures were undertaken. The export level was slowly growing, but remained at mini-scale level throughout the 1950s.

During the entire post war period, all major economic policy decisions were made jointly by the Korean government and the U.S. aid mission to Korea. It becomes a point for speculation whether these policies reflected the goals of the U.S. aid authorities or the Korean government.

#### The Growth Years (1961-1975)

The year 1961 brought several major changes to Korea. First, there was a military coup in May 1961 that gradually evolved into a one man rule. The military government, led

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<sup>48</sup>Kim, K. and Roemer, M., The Transformation of the Korean Economy, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 43.



by Major General Park Chung Hee that ruled the first three years after the coup, managed the economy as an integral and vital part of a garrison state. A strong economy was seen as an indispensable part of the country's overall posture in relation to the DPRK (North Korea). The government's consistent attitude from 1961 on has been that economic competition is deadlier than war.<sup>49</sup>

As a result of the emphasis on Korea's economy, the military government created the first formal five year plan. The plan was geared to attain an annual growth rate of 7.1 percent during the period 1962-1966. The basic goal was to create a viable economic base for industrialization and self-sustained growth.<sup>50</sup> In view of its poor economic performance in the 1950s, the plan appeared to be overly optimistic, but it was readily accepted by a highly industrious and literate population that was prepared to work hard.<sup>51</sup> The 7.1 percent growth rate was obtained and exceeded during this first five year plan and Korea was on its way to an economic "miracle". The growth rate in the first five year plan was an encouraging 7.8 percent. Following the success of the first five year plan, the second and third five year plans were formulated

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<sup>49</sup>Nena Vreeland, Ed., Area Handbook for South Korea (DA PAM 550-41), 1975), p. 215.

<sup>50</sup>Kim and Roemer, p. 44.

<sup>51</sup>"Korea - The Miracle on the Han River" Euromoney, April 1977, p. 4.





and implemented by the government. All of these plans were linked with one basic policy goal; export-oriented industrialization and growth. All other policy goals were either consistent with or secondary to this main objective.<sup>52</sup>

The rapid growth of the Korean economy in the 1960s can be attributed to a variety of economic and non-economic factors, whose relative importance is difficult to determine. First and foremost was the abundance of quality labor. The rapid development of Korea's economy was possible, at least in the initial stage, because of Korea's comparative advantage in cheap, quality labor. The wages in Korea in the 1960s were approximately one seventh of the cost for an equally skilled Japanese laborer.<sup>53</sup> However, abundant supply of quality labor alone does not insure a rapid pace of development. A high level of investment must take place if the surplus labor is to be utilized for production. In the initial stages of the plan, U.S. foreign aid accounted for 83 percent of the foreign investment in 1962, but had dropped to 4.6 percent during 1972-1976.<sup>54</sup> (See Table 3 on page 60.)

The major foreign investors in Korea's economy today are the United States and Japan. The focus on development of

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<sup>52</sup>Kim and Roemer, p. 45.

<sup>53</sup>Euromoney, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup>Korea International Economic Institute, A Handbook of Korea (Seoul: N.P. 1979), p. 463.



TABLE 3

Foreign Capital Inflow by Country  
1959-75 (Relative Share)

	(percent)		
	Public Loans	Private Loans	Direct Investment
U.S.A.	36.6	38.9	22.7
Japan	19.1	18.4	63.8
E.C. Countries	6.3	30.1	7.9
Germany	4.0	6.1	1.1
France	1.1	9.7	0.4
Italy	---	10.6	0.1
Netherlands	---	0.5	6.3
Int'l Organizations	38.0	0.6	---
Others	---	12.0	5.6

Source: Economic Planning Board

of Korea's industrial base could not have been accomplished without heavy foreign investment and the mobilization of domestic savings. During a seven year period ending in 1972, private long term borrowing abroad and private foreign investment accounted for nearly 47 percent of the financing of fixed assets in the corporate sector, and at the peak in 1971 for over 70 percent. Over half this credit has been extended by Japan and the United States.<sup>55</sup>

In terms of the GNP during the first half of the 1960s, foreign savings were roughly 7 percent of the GNP. However, by 1970, it had risen to a high of 9.7 percent and declined in later years.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Vreeland, Area Handbook, p. 224.

<sup>56</sup>KIEI, Handbook, p. 465.



At the beginning of the rapid growth years of the 1960s, the level of national savings were extremely low. Due to this low level of domestic savings (see Table 4 below) at the start of the rapid growth period, savings could not catch up with the rapidly rising investment ratio during the second half of the 1960s, even though the marginal savings rate was 25-30 percent. However, the sustained increase in the domestic savings ratio has resulted in the reduced dependence on foreign savings in recent years.

TABLE 4  
Investment-Savings Gap  
(percent)

	1960	1965	1970	1976
(1) Ratio of Gross Investment to GNP	11	15	27	25.0
(2) Rate of Domestic Savings to GNP	4	8	16	22.3
(3) I-S Gap (1-2)	7	7	11	2.7

Source: Bank of Korea, Economic Statistics Yearbook

### Industrial Policies

As a nation confronted with a distinct lack of domestic resources, both agricultural and mineral resources, and faced with large foreign trade deficits, the South Korean economic planners of the early 1960s, using Japan as a guide, adapted a twofold industrial approach to achieve acceptable rates of economic growth. One approach was to develop a sustained manufacturing capability for export using imported



raw materials and the other was the replacement of imported goods with domestic products. This Korean approach to economic growth has proven to be highly successful.

The government has provided these internal industries substantial protective measures by providing protection against foreign imports and providing large subsidies for firms whose products are exports. The domestic market has also been amply protected by direct controls. South Korean manufacturers also benefit by a complex system of export incentives; exemptions from duties on certain imports, and various other allowances. The cost to the government for these subsidies has mounted rapidly and it was estimated by 1970 that they amounted to almost one-third of the total value of exports.

The results obtained from these protective policies and government controls has been extremely impressive. During the first 16 years since the start of the five year development plans, Korea's exports have grown at a towering rate of 37 percent per year.<sup>57</sup>

#### Exports/Imports

Exports are Korea's life blood, but are more than matched in size by imports. From 1962 to 1973, the period covering the first two 5 year plans, Korea's economy ran a persistent

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<sup>57</sup>Vreeland, Area Handbook, p. 224





balance of payments deficit. This deficit has been financed by foreign investment and more importantly, by borrowing.

Imports have largely out-paced exports until 1969, the year when exports grew at a nominal rate of 36.7 percent against an import rate of 24.7 percent. In 1974, the trade gap worsened considerably as a result of the oil crisis of 1973. The rise in oil prices produced a surge to 61.6 percent in imports while exports grew to 38.3 percent. In that year, Korea's trade deficit grew almost seven times to more than 2 billion. The years of 1974-75 were mostly a testing time for Korea. The fall of Vietnam, the oil crisis and the closure of all the medium term Euromarkets to all but the most credit worthy of borrowers, forced Korea to fund very heavily in the short term markets. In these years, other nations suffered drastic recessions, or at a minimum, breaks in their rates of economic growth, while Korea continued its expansionist policies and continued to develop her economy. This was not done without great risks, as Korea came close to being forced to default on debts to the outside world in the early part of 1975.<sup>58</sup>

#### Third Five Year Plan (1972-1976)

The third five year plan presented an assessment for potential growth of the nation's economy, related economic

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<sup>58</sup>Smith, Financial Times Survey, April 1979.



objectives, and a consistent set of policies and means to reach these objectives. It recognized the strains to the economy, reflected in the heavy dependence on foreign capital, the growing disparity in income and productivity between the industrial sector and the lagging agricultural rural sector, and the continuing problem of inflation.

The basic development strategy of the third five year plan was to further the transformation and expansion of the industrial structure at a high, but somewhat slower and more stable rate. The plan also proposed to further the rapid expansion of exports and substitute domestic products for imports, thereby reducing net foreign capital inflows.

The disparity of incomes between the industrial areas, mainly Seoul and Pusan, and the countryside was recognized and became a major target of the third plan with the following specific goals:

--Self-sufficiency in food was to be attained; the incomes of farmers and fishermen were to be increased; and paddy consolidation and agricultural mechanization were to be facilitated.

--Health, sanitation and cultural facilities in the rural areas were to be improved and expanded; rural electrification and the development of rural road networks were to be expedited.



--The general welfare and livelihood of the people were to be improved by expanding and improving housing, health and sanitation facilities and social security.

--Regional development and decentralization of industries and population were to be expedited through efficient and effective utilization of national land resources, such as the establishment of industrial estates and export industrial parks."<sup>59</sup>

One of the major vehicles was to be a program called Saemaul Undong (meaning new community) movement. The rural areas had worked in a predetermined schedule for centuries. In the Spring, plant rice seed beds and plow the rice paddies; Summer was the time for planting and weeding, and in the Fall it was the harvest. Winter was reserved for light handicrafts and repairs. Saemaul Undong placed emphasis on construction of roads, irrigation facilities and income boosting projects undertaken mostly in the slack months after the harvest. It was a "self-help" campaign, which brought the income levels of the rural areas more in line with the urban workers. The government aided village projects with low cost loans for projects and introduced new high yield strains of rice.

In 1975, the country succeeded in reaching self-sufficiency in barley, however, the overall grain supply was

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<sup>59</sup>KIEI, Handbook, p. 467.



twenty-five percent short because of the negligible quantities of wheat and corn cultivated at home.

The Korean government is now encouraging farmers to begin production of livestock and dairy farming. This is expected to offset the import of beef and mutton from Australia.

Actual Performance: During the third plan, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector grew by 5.9 percent. Rice was an unexpected surprise and far exceeded the original projected growth rate of 4.5 percent. This sector grew with a record high of 8.9 percent in 1976.

The economy itself averaged an 11.2 percent increase during the planning period, which was substantially higher than the 8.6 percent projected for that period. The GNP in 1976 was more than 20 billion dollars and per capita income was more than 600 dollars.

#### Fourth Five Year Plan(1977-1981)

In the fourth five year plan, the emphasis will be placed on structural changes in the industrial sector. The major goals are outlined below:

--"to achieve a further shift in the industrial sector stressing the heavy chemical industry, especially machinery and electronics.

--to sustain export growth and strengthen the balance of payments.





--to improve the distribution of benefits of growth by maintaining the growth of employment and broadening the availability of essential services including health and sanitation, education, housing and electricity,.

Major Growth Targets:

--GNP will expand at 9.2% annually.

--Per capita GNP will increase from \$532 in 1975 to \$1,512 in 1981.

--Mining and manufacturing, growing at 14.2% per annum, will account for 40.9% of the GNP in 1981.

--Agricultural, forestry and fishing will account for 18.5% of the GNP in 1981.

--Social overhead capital and other services will account for 40.6% of the GNP in 1981.

--Commodity exports will reach \$20.2 billion and commodity imports \$18.9 billion in 1981."<sup>60</sup>

These goals recognize the changing nature of the Korean economy. Korean labor, once possibly the cheapest to be found in any Asian country, is no longer particularly cheap by regional standards. The solution to this problem is to switch from labor-intensive products to more technology-intensive products, thereby upgrading the productivity of labor. If the switch can be made evenly and cleanly, it

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<sup>60</sup>Korea Trade Promotion Pamphlet, 1977.



will not block long-term growth prospects for the economy.

The fourth five year plan calls for a more moderate growth rate of 9.2 percent. This probably will be achieved, but will require applying the "brakes" with a tight money policy. This is in reaction to the major problem with Korea's economy today, namely, inflation. The official cost of living index showed a 14.4 percent increase in calendar year 1978, but unofficial sources estimate it at closer to 20-25 percent.

The immediate cause of these high inflation figures is the large amounts of capital inflow from Korea's Middle East construction projects. The money supply rose by 40% in 1977 and is still increasing at an approximate rate of 20-25 percent. This occurred despite a freeze of repatriation and a deliberate engineered "deficit" on the current balance of payments.<sup>61</sup>

As seen earlier, the United States and Japan are by far the heaviest investors in the Korean economy. Then, it should come as no surprise that they are also their largest trading partners for both imports and exports.

What are Korea's imports? Being a country whose exports lead its economy and having hardly any natural resources,

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<sup>61</sup>Smith, Financial Times Survey, April 1979.



raw materials make up the greater portion of Korea's imports. Raw materials represented 71 percent of the imports during the first seven months of 1977. The largest single item of import was crude oil, at 23 percent of the total followed by timber at 5 percent and food grains at 3.5 percent. Other products which are heavily imported are iron ore, scrap iron, natural rubber, wool and copper ore.

Seven categories of manufactured items make up the major part of their export items (65%) during the first seven months of 1978. These seven categories were textiles, electronic goods and components, footwear, steel products, plywood, steel hulled ships and synthetic resin products. Presently, key heavy industry export items are tankers, automobiles, machinery and petrochemical products.<sup>62</sup>

Korea's economy has matured into a prosperous and self-reliant entity, but faces some severe tests in the immediate future. Inflation continues to be the nation's primary problem, but a perceived slow-down in export growth is also causing some concern.<sup>63</sup>

There are many factors behind this export slow-down. The reinstatement of direct controls by Korea's trading partners is a major cause. For example, a recent listing

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<sup>62</sup>KIEI, "A Handbook of Korea", p. 467.

<sup>63</sup>"Economic Trends," U.S. Embassy Report, September 1978, p. 4.



which may not be complete, shows 67 trade barriers imposed against Korean goods, of which 28 have been applied since January 1977.<sup>64</sup>

Other problems for the economy mainly stem from increased labor costs and the continued price climb of crude oil, on which they are highly dependent. At current oil prices, Seoul's oil bill will nearly double to U.S. \$6 billion, in contrast to U.S. \$3.2 billion in 1979.<sup>65</sup>

Currently, the major portion of Korea's electricity is produced by oil fueled power plants, but Korea's economic planners having long been cognizant of the oil situation, have three nuclear power plants operating or are in the final stages of construction, with many more planned for the future.

If South Korea can enact controls to control the overheating caused by inflation, the economy will remain strong and viable, and the future should bring continuing prosperity.

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<sup>64</sup>Korean Times, August 1978, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup>Far East Economic Review, February 8, 1980.





## VI. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS (1953-1980)

The recent assassination of President Park Chung Hee brought to an end an eighteen year rule which transformed Korea from the ranks of one of the poorest nations in Asia to one of the most advanced. But the road which the Korean nation has traveled upon has been a long and arduous one, with many road blocks. Much of the same type of political crisis was faced in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as confronts the nation today, but Korea at that time was found to be lacking the necessary cohesiveness required in a democratic form of government.

The Republic of Korea at the conclusion of the Korean War had serious economic, political and social problems. Inflation and unemployment were rampant and President Rhee was frantically trying to hold onto power by amending the constitution and democracy in any form was rapidly disappearing. The breaking point was reached in the elections of 1960. There were flagrant irregularities in this election and the people did not recognize the legitimacy of the elected administration and a series of demonstrations took place throughout the country. The result was martial law, but the troops who were sent to prevent the demonstrations, joined them instead.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Woo-Keun-Han, The History of Korea (University Press of Hawaii, 1970), pp. 507-510



President Rhee finally stepped down and a caretaker government was formed. A new constitution was drafted and adopted and in June 1960, elections were held and the new government formed. John Chang became the Prime Minister which was the most important post of the new government and Yun Po-Son became the President, but only with "ceremonial" powers.<sup>67</sup>

John Chang's democratic government turned out to be a great disappointment to the Korean people, who had had great expectations after the repressive government of Syngman Rhee. The Chang government was faced with insurmountable problems, which it was ill equipped to handle. There was a strong demand for popular participation in politics and at the same time demands for increased social welfare and a rising standard of living.

The "failure of democracy" was obvious to all and on 16 May 1961, a military coup d'etat was skillfully and bloodlessly executed by Major General Park Chung Hee. The major reason that the coup was bloodless was that the majority of the people and the military realized that the government was corrupt, faction ridden and did not represent the people. The newly established military junta declared that; "their motive was purely patriotic - to cleanse the government of corruption and incompetent

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<sup>67</sup>Edward Reynolds Wright, Ed., Korean Politics in Transition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), p.28.



elements and to restore public order.... It was claimed that the objectives of the 'May 16th Military Revolution' were identical with those of the student uprisings in 1960 - the establishment of a clean, open, just and democratic South Korea."<sup>68</sup>

The military at that time was also the largest body of intelligensia of the nation. They were well trained in modern managerial and problem solving techniques and applied these methods to the country's problem areas, but mainly to the economy. The strong role of the military has been much debated over the years, even when it was "civilianized" in 1963, when General Park took off his uniform and narrowly won the election. As noted, President Park's major contribution to the Korean nation was the modernization of the economy and the concomitant establishment of a strong industrial base. Park, throughout his regime received his major support from the rural areas. This was because of the major efforts that he made to correct the imbalance of income distribution, which went largely to the urban dweller. He did this through the policy of government controlled prices for farm products, which allowed the rural dwellers to share in the nation's growing prosperity. However, economic well-being also brought increased education and a growing awareness of the increasingly literate

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<sup>68</sup>Vreeland, Area Handbook, pp. 169-170.



population that the people should be allowed to participate more in the formation of government planning and policy. This is an extremely simplified version of the real changes that the majority of the Korean population were going through. Korea has a strong Confucian cultural heritage, and with the increased standard of living, the possession of material goods, there has been a fundamental conflict between the old ways and the new westernized style that pervaded even into the Korean political scene. Confucianism beliefs stem from the old adage that "filial piety is the basis for all conduct" to the philosophy that hierarchy and harmony and communal obligations, and these stem from the Confucian rules, which are the basis for all relationships, including the subordination of son to father, younger brother to older brother, wife to husband, and subject to state.<sup>69</sup>

Confucianism is a philosophical justification of government by a virtuous ruler. Virtue in a ruler ensures harmony between man and nature, ensures obedience within a stratified society. Also, "Possessing virtue will give the ruler the people. Possessing the people will give him the territory. Possessing the territory will give him its

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<sup>69</sup>Christian Science Monitor, "South Korea: A Conflict of Fathers and Sons," June 4, 1980.





wealth. Possessing the wealth he will have the resources for expenditure. Virtue is the root, wealth is the result."<sup>70</sup>

The Korean emphasis on Confucianism creates contradictory forces within the modernizing society of today. A large part of the population, especially in the rural villages, still adheres to this philosophy and Park Chung Hee, whose roots came from one of these rural villages, moulded his regime after Confucian precepts.

Westernized concepts of individual rights and freedoms go against these traditional concepts and still have not been totally accepted by the people. The result under President Park Chung Hee was a bastardized form of democracy. This "Koreanized democracy" consisted of virtually all facets of government. This dictatorial form of government was slowly brought into creation with the starting point being the passage, in 1969, of a constitutional amendment that allowed Park to run for a third term. Again he won by a narrow margin and President Park's moves toward complete authoritarianism began in earnest. In 1971, during a period of anti-government demonstrations, President Park declared a state of emergency. Following this he pushed through a law which would be called the "Yushin" or revitalizing constitution. This law changed the

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid, p. 13:



presidential term from four to six years and created a new political body, the National Conference for Unification. The NCU's sole mission was to elect the President by secret ballot and to approve the President's appointment of one-third of its membership. This blatant manipulation of the political machinery has caused a series of dissident activities throughout the years, but President Park had managed to retain power by means of supplementary emergency decrees, until his assassination on October 26, 1979.<sup>71</sup>

His legacy leaves Korea with two political parties, the Democratic Republican party, the standard bearer for the government and the New Democrats, the opposition party. The government parties have traditionally stressed national security, anti-communism and political stability. whereas the "opposition" party had lobbied for a more liberal democracy, respect for individual rights and freedom and more social programs.<sup>72</sup> But in Korea today, the leadership of both parties is either under arrest, on trial, or has permanently retired from political life.

The main figure behind all the recent political upheavals is the former General Chun Du Hwan, who recently ascended to the Presidency by means of a rubber-stamped

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<sup>71</sup>Robert Shaplen, A Turning Wheel (New York: Random House, 1979).

<sup>72</sup>Wright, Korean Politics, p. 48.



election conducted by the National Council for Reunification, the South Korean version of an Electoral College.

President Chun, 49, was a relatively obscure Major General before President Park's assassination last October 26, but shortly thereafter, he rose to prominence as the head of the Defense Security Command. On the night of December 12, General Chun, who was in charge of investigating the presidential assassination, staged a military coup, when he arrested General Chung Seung-hwa, his superior, who has since been sentenced to seven years in prison for allegedly having played a part in the assassination.<sup>73</sup>

Subsequent to the military coup, Major General Chun purged the military of forty high ranking officers whom he considered to be corrupt and incompetent.

There are rumors that these actions were brought about by Chun's fear that General Chung and the older generals, some who had been on the active list for the last twenty-five years,<sup>74</sup> intended to displace Chun and his associates by sending them to obscure military posts.<sup>75</sup> This service rivalry stems from the fact that Major General Chun was a leading figure in the first class of officers to graduate from the four year military academy in 1956. That class,

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<sup>73</sup>New York Times, 15 April 1980, p. A9.

<sup>74</sup>Christian Science Monitor, 31 July, 1980, p.10.

<sup>75</sup>Monterey Peninsula Herald (AP), 17 August 1980, p. 2.



number 11, considers itself to be the nation's true military elite and looked down upon the older officers who had graduated from the short, six month officer course, before and during the Korean War.<sup>76</sup> It should also be noted here that in Korean society, next to the family, one's classmates require the strongest loyalty and fidelity. The spirit and closeness generated by that association is of primary importance throughout one's life and it is obvious that General Chun has emerged as Class 11's leader and mentor. This is further evidenced by the rapidity that Chun has promoted his followers, some as high as Lieutenant General and the key posts that they now occupy in his government.

After the December 12 coup, General Chun quickly consolidated his power, reducing the position of President Choi Kyu Hah to a figurehead. The method Chun used was to establish a "Special Committee for National Security Measures," (SCNSM), which essentially gave him the power of implementation over all government policies and activities. This de-facto junta ran counter to U.S. hopes and efforts to bring about democratic rule to South Korea. The United States had repeatedly attempted to influence the situation by warning the military to keep a low profile and to stay out of politics and by urging the civilian leadership to

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid.





move toward a more liberal and broadly based government.<sup>77</sup> General Chun was probably responding to these efforts last May, when he insisted: "I have no political ambitions."<sup>78</sup> But his quick and highly successful behind the scenes maneuvering indicates that Chun is an astute politician as well as a highly successful and popular military leader.

Through SCNSM, General Chun has conducted numerous "purification" drives highly reminiscent of Park Chung Hee's actions with the "Supreme Council for National Reconstruction", which was the country's highest governing body following the May 16, 1961 military coup. The SCNR also "enacted several measures designed to rid the country of hoodlums, curb subversive activities and to improve the political climate and economic conditions."<sup>79</sup> At that time some 35,000 government employees were dismissed on grounds of corruption or incompetence and were replaced mainly with active or retired military personnel.<sup>80</sup>

In comparison, President Chun's purification measures have yielded: - more than 30,000 "hooligans" and other

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<sup>77</sup>Los Angeles Times, 1 June 1980

<sup>78</sup>Time Magazine, 8 September 1980, p. 36.

<sup>79</sup>Vreeland, Area Handbook, p. 176.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.



undesirable and corrupt elements have been shipped to government re-education camps.<sup>81</sup>

- has removed more than 300 agents accused of corruption, high-handedness and incompetence from the KCIA ranks. Along with the KCIA "purges", there were 1,355 police officers dismissed, 1,544 employees of provincial governments, 441 from the Seoul metropolitan administration, 385 from the National Tax Administration and 149 from the National Custom authority.<sup>82</sup>

- listed for ostracism were some 232 higher ranking civil servants, including one Cabinet member, 38 of vice ministerial level and 34 of the grade 1 level.<sup>83</sup>

- the Korean Newspaper Association has been forced to "purge" at least 400 "unreliable" journalists, this included some of the most respected editors in the country.<sup>84</sup>

- the press, radio and television are more thoroughly controlled than at any time except for the most stringent days of the Park regime.<sup>85</sup>

- the "three" Kims, who were most commonly regarded as contestants for the Presidency have each suffered

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<sup>81</sup>Time, 8 September 1980, p. 37.

<sup>82</sup>New York Times, 16 July 1980, p. A2.

<sup>83</sup>Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Vol. IV. No. 135, p. 30.

<sup>84</sup>Time, 8 September 1980, A2.

<sup>85</sup>Christian Science Monitor, 14 August 1980, p. 1.



different fates and were eliminated from political contention.

Kim Jong Pil was accused of corruption and embezzlement of government funds and was put under house arrest. Eventually, he was forced to pay a fine and to give up all of his positions. He is now retired from politics and lives a cloistered private life.<sup>86</sup>

Kim Young Sam, the South Korean opposition leader of the New Democratic Party, who had been under house arrest since last May, recently resigned from his position saying that he will also resign from politics because of his failure to fulfill his responsibility as the parliamentary oppositions leader.<sup>87</sup>

It has been rumored that General Chun had two major objectives when he came into power. One was to eliminate the assassinated President Park's nemesis, opposition party leader Kim Dae Jung from the political scene, and the second was to see through to a conclusion the execution of former KCIA director and Presidential assassin Kim Jae Kyu. Both of these objectives have been accomplished, but the arrest of Kim Dae Jung, in conjunction with a sweeping martial law decree set off outright insurrection in Kwanju City, South Cholla province. Kim Dae Jung is a native of

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Christian Science Monitor, 14 August 1980, p. 2.



this traditionally poor province and it has always been the seat of his political power. The martial law investigators issued a 14 page report in which they say that they have evidence that Kim Dae Jung planned to overthrow the government. Under South Korean law, sedition charges can lead to the death penalty.<sup>88</sup>

Kim and 23 others accused of attempting to overthrow the government went before a military court martial beginning on 14 August, at Army Headquarters. Specifically, they were charged with, "organizing the Union of Democratic Youths as an agit-prop support network in support of his anti-government struggle following the October 26 assassination of Pak Chong-hui last year. Kim and his followers apparently saw the demise of President Pak as the advent of a good chance for them to seize power, the prosecutor charged."<sup>89</sup>

The fate of Kim Dae Jung will probably turn out to be the most crucial decision of President Chun's political career. The Korean people and the international community will most likely judge President Chun and his new government on the outcome of that trial. For whatever Kim Dae Jung is currently made out to be, the former Presidential candidate enjoys wide popularity at home and abroad by

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<sup>88</sup>New York Times, 23 May 1980, p. A8.

<sup>89</sup>FBIS, 14 August 1980, p. E1.





supporters who regard him to be a "Champion of democracy." There exists a definite feeling of concern by many of Korea's allies and the charges have been described as "pretty far-fetched" by the U.S. State Department.<sup>90</sup>

Even China, in the August 4, 1980 Beijing Review, saw fit to criticize General Chun's motives and the handling of the Kim Dae Jung affair. That article states:

"Kim Dae Jung and eight other democrats were put on 'trial' before an army tribunal for 'high treason' by Chun Du Hwan and his associates after suppressing the popular uprising in Kwangju, South Korea.

Chun Du Hwan wants to physically eliminate Kim Dae Jung, not because the latter is guilty of any capital crime. Chun wants Kim out of the way so that he can resuscitate the odious Pak Jung Hi tyranny.... Now Chun Du Hwan is trying to complete what his mentor could not...the demand for democracy, freedom and the reunification of their country by the people must be answered and Chun Du Hwan and company cannot stop this..."

There is some evidence that President Chun is becoming concerned with all the adverse publicity that the military trial has generated and that the dissident Kim Dae Jung may well be turned over to the civil courts to be tried. The standard legal procedure for a guilty verdict will be an appeal through a second military court and then on to the supreme court of South Korea. The case is expected to continue for several months and if Kim Dae Jung is given the sentence of death and it is confirmed through the

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<sup>90</sup>Christian Science Monitor, 14 August 1980, p. 2.



legal procedures, President Chun still has the power to commute it to life imprisonment. But, if President Chun Du Hwan presses for the death penalty and carried through with the execution, South Korea would probably convulse into continuous chaos and bloodshed.

In the face of this state of affairs, our Secretary of State Muskie declared that he was, "deeply concerned that South Korea was moving away from liberalizing policies."<sup>91</sup> The problem for the United States is that there has been a steady atrophy of the amount of influence that can be brought to bear on South Korea, who has in turn become a fairly independent nation. The major bargaining chips that remain are:

1. Withdrawal of U.S. forces.
2. Withdrawal of specialized weapon systems (nuclear and conventional).
3. Curtailment of arms sales and related support concomitant with a holdback of technology.

South Korea highly values all of these factors, but it is doubtful if the removal or threat of removal would be sufficient to bring about a change in attitude or direction of South Korea's current leadership. Also, it would seem inappropriate to withdraw these forces or instigate other actions which would undermine the overall deterrent

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<sup>91</sup>Time Magazine, 2 June 1980, pp. 37-38.



value, when it is needed the most. The United States is once again thrust upon the horns of a dilemma. Should the U.S. support another authoritarian ruler in South Korea? Or should we extract our forces and risk our international credibility?

If we are fortunate, neither of these options will come to pass. Former President Choi, who resigned on August 16, had made certain promises to the Korean people. These included a revision of the "Yushin" or "revitalizing" constitution and that national elections would be held in 1981. These statements were looked upon with skepticism at the time they were made, because of the continuation of martial law and the apparent consolidation of the military's power. But at General Chun's inaugural ceremonies, the new President pledged a constitutional referendum would be held before the end of October and that martial law would be lifted before the new presidential election, now scheduled for June 1981.<sup>92</sup> Chun's statements reaffirm former President Choi's statements on both issues. This is an exceptionally good omen for the future of Korean politics. Legally, President Chun could serve out the remaining portion of the assassinated President Park's term, which does not expire until 1984. Therefore, President Chun has put before himself the goal of winning an election, albeit

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<sup>92</sup>Christian Science Monitor, 2 September 1980, p. 12.



an indirect election by June 1981. President Chun's "purification" campaign has cultivated his image as a "social reformer", which has proved to be basically popular in a country long accustomed to authoritarian rule. But diplomats and some influential Koreans have privately counselled President Chun that unless he softens his stand, he will soon face the same internal opposition that haunted President Park during his final months.<sup>93</sup>

President Chun's popularity will have to pass its first uncontrolled test when the universities reopen, which they are scheduled to do late in September 1980.

Korean college students, in conjunction with the military, have to be rated as one of the most potent political forces in the ROK. They repeatedly have demonstrated their ability to act as a powerful pressure group, even though their lack of a coherent coordinated program somewhat limits their overall efficiency.

Nevertheless, they managed to jeopardize and eventually topple the Rhee government in 1960, and later drove the country to the verge of anarchy, which brought the military forces into power, and were the foremost opponents of President Park's ROK-Japan treaty. Eventually, they were

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<sup>93</sup>U.S. News & World Report, 8 September 1980, p. 32.





able to bring about the forces which toppled Park Chung Hee from power.<sup>94</sup>

The students, whom many seem to think of as reflecting the soul of the Korean people, have seen successive authoritarian governments which suffer from a lack of legitimacy and participation. Elections have been tainted with irregularities and the governments which have stayed in power have been plagued by widespread corruption and favoritism, which has indirectly contributed to an uneven distribution of wealth.

These are serious problems and constitute some of the basic grievances of the students today. However, the main ingredient of the Korean student movements consist of nationalism, which includes both anti-foreign influences and the reunification issue. Also, the democracy problem or anti-authoritarianism is especially prevalent in the younger generation and for the students. It is at the center of all the problems. Unfortunately, they have usually succeeded in mortally wounding their own causes by demanding too much too soon, thereby giving the other major political force - the military, the opportunity to shut the doors of democracy in the name of security.

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<sup>94</sup> Kwan Bong Kim, The Korean-Japan Treaty Crisis and the Instability of the Korean Political System, (Praeger: New York, 1971), p. 278.



The issues raised by the student movement are largely representative of all the socio-economic strata of Korean society, therefore, they are relevant to the aspirations of the entire nation. Since their movement has a great degree of historical and social validity, it strengthens the overall legitimacy of their protests. The students have always been the vanguard of political movement in Korea and feel that they have a distinctive and righteous role to play in national affairs. The excessive role the students do have in Korean politics reflects the political and social instability of the current and past systems.

The question then becomes, "How will President Chun Du Hwan's governmental system differ from the past and what are the national objectives?" The best information available to answer those questions is from an interview given by Chun Du Hwan to Yi Chin-wi, President of the Munwha Broadcasting Company, which was reported in the English version of the Korea Herald on 12 August 1980, page 5, in which Chun Du Hwan says:

"....our national objective should be the creation of a democratic welfare state. Strange as it may sound, it should be our new objective, more concretely, we should Koreanize democracy, first and foremost.

Democracy is a universal value. We should make joint efforts to materialize the value. However, ways of realizing the value cannot be the same. The maturity of democracy cannot be the same as in Western society, which has Christianity as its cultural background and long democratic traditions,



and the Oriental society which has a different cultural background. If a Western version of a democracy should be transplanted in an Oriental society, it will not take root. An imitation of democracy is incapable of meeting society's needs. It merely invites social unrest and poverty and stagnation. Now we find ourselves in a new era and we should create and develop a new version of democracy which is suitable to our political climate...In our society, some radical democrats or doctrinaires have discouraged the tailoring of democracy to our needs by holding a Western version of democracy as absolute truth. They have not assimilated democracy fully.

Speaking of culture, we should not imitate Western culture unconditionally but assimilate, modify and accept it. This does not mean we are exclusive but that we esteem ourselves and our determination to Koreanize democracy should be developed into a resolve to defeat communism and achieve national unification...

Second, we should launch policies aimed at building a welfare state. We should make steady developments in order to establish a firm self-reliant system both in defense and economy. But the quality of the people's livelihood should not continue to be sacrificed. In this decade, such full-fledged welfare programs as a comprehensive medical insurance, retirement insurance and unemployment insurance should be implemented. We should also implement welfare programs in such a way as to enable all the people to benefit from developments....Our national objectives should be the Koreanization of democracy and the creation of a just society in which welfare programs are implemented.

Q: What will the new political order be like and what will be outlined in the new constitution?

A: We have learned a great lesson since the assassination of President Chong-hee last October 26. With the loss of the focus of power, the nation became like a kite without its string. The discipline of the bureaucracy loosened and the Saemaul campaign entered into the doldrums. The growth of the nation's economy, once termed as miraculous, receded into a minus growth within several months. There was a real danger that the





entire Korean society would retrogress by several decades without a strong leadership. This is why a presidential system is deemed ideal\* for the nation's stability and continued growth.

Apart from the lesson of last October 26, it is very clear what kind of political order there should be in this country, which confronts an enemy in the northern part of the peninsula. In order to survive under these circumstances, we have to rally all our forces. Given this reality, a parliamentary government cannot insure stability, and a dual executive system is likely to bring about confusion...

The two major tasks facing the next presidential election, will be how to eliminate corruption and most effectively reflect national opinion. I understand that indirect election is being considered for the next president. However, it should not be in the nature of a confidence vote for a specific person as done by the National Conference for unification in the past. It should guarantee a free competition of candidates in order to reflect national opinion.

Q: Will there be any change in the proposed political schedule?

A: We should stick to the timetable as announced by the President (at that time it was still Choi Kyu Hah)... For National security as well as economic development, the sooner the transitional situation is over, the better.

Q: The role of Intellectuals will be particularly important in the creating of a new era and new history. What do you think the roles of journalists, cultural leaders and scholars should be?

A: ...the main function of intellectuals should be criticizing social irregularities. However, criticisms should be constructive ones and they should not be designed to destroy the nation.

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\* (Underlining added by the author for emphasis)





...Accordingly, I call on Korean intellectuals to refrain from indulging in criticizing the government and fully participate in the building of a nation state."

The Ministry of Culture and Information has deemed this interview so important, that 200,000 copies are being printed and distributed to leading personages in every spectrum of society.

To reiterate, the main points of President Chun's program are:

- (1) The construction of a welfare state.
- (2) Stability of the nation.
- (3) Development of a new presidential system.
- (4) Early end to transitional measures, with elections in June, 1981.
- (5) Establishment of a new political climate through social reform.<sup>95</sup>

Even though President Chun has promised these "Koreanized" democratic reforms, many observers are still convinced that he will continue to use the outward forms of a constitutional government merely as a facade of legitimacy for a tough authoritarian regime. But the Korean people, if given a choice between Kim Il-sung or President Chun Du Hwan, will obviously still choose the latter.

The Korean nation currently stands at the crossroads of decision. Should they again take to the streets and risk

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<sup>95</sup>FBIS, 14 August 1980, p. E4.



their very lives as they did in Kwanju last May or should they accept Chun Du Hwan for the moment, and see if he carries out his promises of a short transitional government with constitutional reforms and presidential elections next June. But in the eyes of South Korea's student population, President Chun has already confirmed their worst fears. The students can see a reenactment of the political developments of the 1960s, where the leaders of the May 16 military coup firmly entrenched themselves into the government bureaucracy with promises of a steady transition toward a more democratic government, which remained unfulfilled.

The coming months will be very important in determining if Chun Du Hwan has the popular support to construct a viable government, thus enabling him to enact laws, which would "Koreanize" democracy and establish his envisioned welfare state. President Chun also faces several possible crisis situations with unknown outcomes. These could undermine his current government and might ultimately determine the direction of democracy. First, there is the problem of what to do with Kim Dae Jung and second, will Korea's economy stabilize or does the future hold more inflation and possible labor unrest. The third crisis situation must be faced later this month when the universities open. Will the students start to demonstrate again or has President Chun convinced them that the current government is progressive and viable and that it will proceed with the promised reforms.



Within living memory we have seen Korea metamorphisize from a Confucian dynasty, to an occupied colony, to an idealogically divided nation, civil war and the establishment of two separate Korean nations. South Korea has continued this dynamic process with political revolution, military coups, and Presidential assassination to become a fairly modern, industrial based country, albeit still somewhat instable politically. The Korean people are now faced with another opportunity to demand a truly democratic form of government, They can no longer look to the United States to influence their country's leadership. All the United States can do is to try and provide a suitable environment for establishment of a democratic process. It is the Korean people's responsibility to make it grow. It is time they took the risk to start the process.

If the Korean people can pass through this current political crisis and successfully transfer power through an elective process that reflects popular public opinion, then they will have taken a major step in the direction of a more mature and liberal type of government.



## VII. POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

The Korean peninsula has rightly been termed the "flashpoint" of Asia. The United States and the major communist powers have been in a continuing toe-to-toe confrontation over this small nation's fate for the last thirty-five years. So far, this paper has tried to analyze the situation on the peninsula and has tried to highlight the U.S. interests. It is now time to see how those interests might be best served in the future and to examine the various policy options the United States can take.

1. (Talk to the North). I will discuss the most controversial of these options first, namely, that the United States and North Korea meet independently, if necessary, to discuss possible courses of actions that would benefit the interests of all nations involved on the peninsula. North Korea has, in the past, suggested such talks, but certain elements within the United States suggest that negotiations would give the North a propaganda tool, which they would use to improve their claim to sole legitimacy on the peninsula. Also, critics say that this would add a new divisive element to the already strained U.S.-R.O.K. relations.

A rebuttal of the critics would have to include a reminder that sometimes solutions that are thought to be





unsolvable problems, sometimes involve great risk. Who would have thought that a mere ten years would have brought about the abrogation of our Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan and the granting of "most favored Nation" status to the People's Republic of China.

The United States has contributed to the Korean stalemate by maintaining an unchanging Northeast Asia policy for the past twenty-five years. Exploring new channels might cause controversy, but it also might bring to light some solutions. The leadership of North Korea has to know that its prospects for a solution on their terms, whether this be a military solution or a negotiated solution, are declining rapidly because of the economic and technological advances in the South. Therefore, the sooner we can get them to the negotiating table, the better off both nations will be. It would be unfortunate that because of our intractability, North Korea and the aging Kim Il-sung felt that they only had one "last" chance to unify the peninsula and attacked the South.<sup>96</sup>

Currently, the United States forces are the only foreign forces located on the peninsula. The last communist forces withdrew from the North in 1958. We are dealing from a position of strength and if we do have visions of withdrawing our combat forces, why not obtain something from the

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<sup>96</sup>Gareth Porter, "Time to talk with the North," Foreign Policy, No. 25, Winter, 1977.



North in exchange for our withdrawal? What could this something be? There are a wide range of possibilities that could lead to reduction of tensions. For example - a mutual reduction of forces in the North and South with on-site inspections, a North-South non-aggression treaty, cross recognition, admission of the two Koreas to the U.N., an agreement between both parties to negotiate in good faith before the U.S. Security Council. The main point is that the U.S. will sometime in the future withdraw our forces from Korea, so why not receive some real "Currency" from the North in return? The North is extremely sensitive to the United States' nuclear capability located in the South and would likely reciprocate with verifiable reductions in troop strength or a reduction in the level of arms acquisition and manufacture in return for their removal.

2. (Disengagement). American ground forces, deployed on the Korean peninsula, have played a decisive role in the maintenance of the security of the Republic of Korea and in the continued stability of Northeast Asia. The current administration has proposed to withdraw American combat troops from the Korean peninsula. The rationale behind such a withdrawal are many and varied, with the most obvious being the increasing capability of the R.O.K. to defend itself and the most sublime - the psychological paranoia of the United States ground forces being involved in another "Asian" war.



The problems for the United States, if it implemented the policy, would be a loss of influence vis-a-vis the Republic of Korea and a loss of the overall operational control of the R.O.K. military.

With the current political uncertainty in the South, the price of such action as total withdrawal seems too steep a price to pay. It is incumbent upon the U.S. to maintain security and stability on the Korean peninsula while balancing partial removal of U.S. ground forces with a phased improvement of the ROK military capability. At the same time these moves must keep in step with the political developments of the United States' relationships with China, Japan and the USSR. Presently, a secure and reliable relationship with South Korea is conducive to stability and the reduction of tensions in the area should be the test of the rate of troop reductions, instead of the political and domestic benefits the American President would accrue from the withdrawal program.

3. (Limited Disengagement). This option would entail the basic considerations as option #2, but would let the United States slowly continue the withdrawal program, while still providing security and stability to the Korean peninsula

A possible scenario for this type of withdrawal program would be to reduce the 2nd Infantry Division to a one brigade level, which would still provide a "tripwire".



because more than 3,000 American ground combat soldiers would remain positioned in the major invasion corridor. This brigade, which could be rotated from the 2nd Division's American based location on a yearly basis, or if that was too costly, separate battalions could be rotated. This brigade would still continue the mission of providing security and support for the Panmunjom Security area, but would not require the extensive network of facilities or logistical support which is currently being provided to the 2nd Infantry Division.

A programmed transfer of equipment to offset the two missing brigades could be established and the remaining unit could also provide training for the ROK units in the area.

The advantages of such a program would be the perception of the North and South Koreans of a continued American presence, with a concomitant increase in capacity of South Korean forces. The American military could still remain in command and control of the ROK forces under the guise of the United Nations Command and this would enable the U.S. military to continue to exert stabilizing influences on the ROK leadership.

A brigade sized element would fulfill all the functions of the current division deployment, but would allow the United States more flexibility in the deployment of its own forces. Also, if at some future date the decision was made to withdraw all U.S. forces, the impact of withdrawing one





brigade of ground forces would have much less repercussion than the current phased division withdrawal which has been temporarily halted. There is a large difference in connotation in having at least the one American combat brigade stationed on the peninsula, versus the planned withdrawal of all combat ground forces.

4. (Redefine the Status Quo.) The United States has derived certain benefits from supporting the static situation as it now exists on the Korean peninsula. The least of which is the prevention of another war. The U.S. has also been able to support an extremely non-communist type of government, which has in turn provided the ROK a relatively stable framework, in which to reconstruct and become one of the highly touted economic "success" stories of Asia. If war can be prevented from recurring on the peninsula, the Korean economy has the potential to become a smaller version of Japan, and like that country, become an asset to other non-communist countries in Asia. The current problem for the United States is to decide how to support Korea's efforts towards obtaining this goal of national independence, free from the coercion of the North. The time has come for the United States to take a new look at the Korean situation, with an eye towards preserving U.S. interests in Northeast Asia. Our post World War II involvement in the affairs of the newly emerging Korean nation and our subsequent defense of her right to exist,



has unfortunately meant a continued involvement in the area, long after the other nations that were involved withdraw their forces. It would seem that the diplomatic changes that have occurred in Northeast Asia would require a "new" look by the U.S. Leadership concerned with our Asian interests. There are several alternatives to be explored, which include those options previously analyzed in this paper, but also several which were not presented. One version could call for a continuation of support to South Korea while attempting to work out a comprehensive political settlement. However, a political settlement would require the endorsement and support of the D.P.R.K., which is not likely to happen as long as Kim Il-sung remains in power with his continued call for reunification, and only on the North's terms.

The United States is also to blame for the continuing tension on the Korean peninsula. The U.S. has acted as the guarantor of South Korea's security for the last twenty-seven years, and the situation has not changed, nor is there any indication that it will in the future. The tensions between the two Korean nations remain at the same level as it did when the war ended in 1953.<sup>97</sup> The futility of continuing such a policy which does not reduce

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<sup>97</sup>Nathan N. White, U.S. Policy Toward Korea, (Westview Press: Boulder, Colo.) 1979, pp. 87-94.



the future risk of involvement, not to mention the costs, is foolish and it should be the current task of the United States to redefine our policies and obligations in relation to South Korea.

The Koreans, both North and South, continue to build their armed forces, but the North's rapid and determined build-up borders on the irrational because it has substantially damaged her civilian economic sector and was the basic cause for her international defaults in 1975. The North is again trying to renegotiate her Japanese loans and at the same time still owes the Soviet Union an outstanding debt of approximately 700 million dollars. This continued build-up of war material and weaponry seems to indicate that the North's tensions go well beyond a "defensive" posture and the continual discovery of "invasion" tunnels and armed clashes with infiltrators show that the North feels that it derives some kind of benefit from provocative actions.

It also appears that the South lacks self confidence in their ability to survive a renewed conflict, despite their phenomenal economic growth and the people's firm anti-communist commitment. This perception probably results from the large disparities in the military balance, which is offset by the deterrence role of the U.S. forces based in the invasion corridors above Seoul. This would indicate that the ROK has an obligation to work harder and conduct



themselves rationally so they can hasten the day they can take over the responsibilities that they now leave to the U.S.





### VIII. CONCLUSION

Since the end of World War II, the United States has played a decisive role in shaping the course of events in Korea. This U.S. involvement has stemmed from a series of U.S. policy decisions, which proved to be critical for Korea. They are:

(1) The 1945 decision to share the military takeover of the Korean nation with the Soviet Union. This resulted in the eventual division of the Korean nation.

(2) The decision to support a non-communist form of government in South Korea. The ultimate result of this decision was the creation of a new state known as the "Republic of Korea". This was also the beginning of our major interest on the peninsula, which was to perpetuate and support this new nation and its anti-communist government.

(3) The U.S. policy decision in 1950, to exclude Korea and Taiwan from our Asian defense perimeter.

(4) The decision to come to the aid of South Korea, whose very existence was being threatened by the North Korean armed forces. Our participation in the Korean war prevented the formation of a Unified Communist Korea.

(5) The establishment of a Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of Korea in 1953. This demonstrated a continuing commitment to support the newly established South



Korean nation against communist aggressors. Subsequent to this agreement the United States extended large amounts of military and economic aid to the ROK, which implied a concern for that nation's military and economic well-being.

(6) The decision to withdraw U.S. forces and to reduce the amount of economic and military assistance provided. This process started in the late 1960s, when U.S. economic aid was closed off and again in 1970, when the Seventh Infantry Division was withdrawn to the United States. This process is slowly continuing, but the ROK is attempting to delay the removal of the military for as long as possible. Other developments, which appear to be a direct result of this withdrawal process were the crude attempts by the ROK to try to acquire influence within the U.S. Congress and the increase in capabilities of the ROK Army by purchasing advanced weapon systems from the U.S. and other nations.

There can be no argument that the United States has been and will continue to be deeply involved in the affairs of South Korea. All of our policy considerations derive from this one consideration.<sup>98</sup>

Political stability is the current goal of both the United States and the government of South Korea. Until that goal is achieved, any progress in reduction of tension on the peninsula must be gradual and worked for patiently. The

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid, p. 31.



new military leadership in the South must recognize the demands of the populace for greater participation in government and a revised "democratic" constitution, even at the cost of anti-government demonstrations. The continued repression of fundamental "rights" can only intensify the unrest in the South and encourage the leadership in the North to continue with their bellicose actions.

The United States should also search for new avenues of negotiation to help ease the long standing confrontation. This could include the direct approach to the North Koreans or a conference with the Chinese or the Russians to try and resolve the Korean crisis. The Chinese and the Russians both have limited influence over the North, but these avenues should be tested and exploited by our current leadership.

The Koreans have an ancient adage which they continually quote when dealing in foreign affairs with the great powers. It superbly illustrates that the United States and other powers involved in Northeast Asia can influence and guide the course of action in regards to the Korean peninsula:

"In a fight between whales, the back of the shrimp bursts."



Appendix #1 - Cairo Agreement

December 1, 1943

CAIRO DECLARATION (U.S.A., U.K., CHINA)

The several military missions have agreed upon future military operations against Japan, The Three Great Allies expressed their resolve to bring unrelenting pressure against their brutal enemies by sea, land, and air. This pressure is already rising.

The Three Great Allies are fighting this war to restrain and punish the aggression of Japan. They covet no gain for themselves and have no thought of territorial expansion. It is their purpose that Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the first World War in 1914 and that all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China. Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed. The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.

With these objects in view, the three Allies, in harmony with those of the United Nations at war with Japan, will





continue to persevere in the serious and prolonged operations necessary to procure the unconditional surrender of Japan.

Signed: Franklin D. Roosevelt  
Winston Churchill  
Chiang Kai-Shek

From: Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. IX, p. 393



Appendix #2 - Extract from the Moscow Agreement

December 27, 1945

EXTRACT FROM MOSCOW DECLARATION ON KOREA  
(U.S.A., U.K., U.S.S.R.)

III. Korea

1. With a view to the reestablishment of Korea as an independent state, the creation of conditions for developing the country on democratic principles and the earliest possible liquidation of the disastrous results of the protracted Japanese domination in Korea, there shall be set up a provisional Korean democratic government which shall take all the necessary steps for developing the industry, transport and agriculture of Korea and the national culture of the Korean people.

2. In order to assist the formation of a provisional Korean government and with a view to the preliminary elaboration of the appropriate measures, there shall be established a Joint Commission consisting of representatives of the United States Command in southern Korea and the Soviet command in northern Korea. In preparing their proposals the Commission shall consult with the Korean democratic parties and social organizations. The recommendations worked out by the Commission shall be presented for the consideration of the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist



Republics, China and the United Kingdom and the United States prior to final decision by the two Governments represented on the Joint Commission.

3. It shall be the task of the Joint Commission, with the participation of the provisional Korean democratic government and of the Korean democratic organizations to work out measures also for helping and assisting (trusteeship) the political, economic and social progress of the Korean people, the development of democratic self-government and the establishment of the national independence of Korea.

The proposals of the Joint Commission shall be submitted, following consultation with the provisional Korean Government for the joint consideration of the Governments of the United States, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and China for the working out of an agreement concerning a four-power trusteeship of Korea for a period of up to five years.

4. For the consideration of urgent problems affecting both southern and northern Korea and for the elaboration of measures establishing permanent coordination in administrative-economic matters between the United States command in southern Korea and the Soviet command in northern Korea,



a conference of the representatives of the United States and Soviet Commands in Korea shall be convened within a period of two weeks.

Signed: V. Molotov  
Ernest Bevin  
James F. Byrnes

From: Korea's Independence, Bulletin of the Department of State, (No. 2933), October 1947, pp. 18-19





Appendix #3 - Truman Doctrine

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE  
HARRY S. TRUMAN

The gravity of the situation which confronts the world today necessitates my appearance before a joint session of the Congress. The foreign policy and the national security of this country are involved.

One aspect of the present situation, which I wish to present to you at this time for your consideration and decision, concerns Greece and Turkey.

The United States has received from the Greek Government an urgent appeal for financial and economic assistance. Preliminary reports from the American Economic Mission now in Greece and reports from the American Ambassador in Greece corroborate the statement of the Greek Government that assistance is imperative if Greece is to survive as a free nation.

. . . . .

The very existence of the Greek state is today threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by Communists, who defy the Government's authority at a number of points, particularly along the northern boundaries....

Meanwhile, the Greek Government is unable to cope with the situation. The Greek Army is small and poorly equipped.



It needs supplies and equipment if it is to restore the authority of the Government throughout Greek territory.

Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy. The United States must supply that assistance. We have already extended to Greece certain types of relief and economic aid but these are inadequate. There is no other country to which democratic Greece can turn. No other nation is willing and able to provide the necessary support for a democratic Greek Government.

The British Government, which has been helping Greece, can give no further financial or economic aid after March 31. Great Britain finds itself under the necessity of reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece.

. . . . .

One of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the United States is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion. This was a fundamental issue in the war with Germany and Japan. Our victory was won over countries which sought to impose their will, and their way of life, upon other nations.

To insure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is



designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free people to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. This is no more than a frank recognition that totalitarian regimes imposed on free peoples, by direct or indirect aggression, undermine the foundations of international peace and hence the security of the United States.

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta Agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.



The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free people to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

The world is not static, and the status quo is not sacred. But we cannot allow changes in the status quo in violation of the Charter of the United Nations by such methods as coercion, or by such subterfuges as political infiltration. In helping free and independent nations to maintain their freedom, the United States will be giving effect to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is necessary only to glance at a map to realize that the survival and integrity of the Greek nation are of grave importance in a much wider situation. If Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the entire Middle East.





Moreover, the disappearance of Greece as an independent state would have a profound effect upon those countries in Europe whose peoples are struggling against great difficulties to maintain their freedoms and their independence while they repair the damages of war.

It would be an unspeakable tragedy if these countries, which have struggled so long against overwhelming odds, should lose the victory for which they sacrificed so much. Collapse of free institutions and loss of independence would be disastrous not only for them but for the world. Discouragement and possible failure would quickly be the lot of neighboring peoples striving to maintain their freedom and independence.

Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute action.

. . . . .



Appendix #4 - Secretary of State Acheson's Speech  
to the National Press Club on January 12, 1950

CRISIS IN ASIA - AN EXAMINATION OF U.S. POLICY

An Extract of Remarks by Secretary Acheson

Foundations of Policy

This afternoon I should like to discuss with you the relations between the peoples of the United States and the peoples of Asia, and I used the words "relations of the peoples of the United States and the peoples of Asia" advisedly. I am not talking about governments or nations because it seems to me what I want to discuss with you is this feeling of mine that the relations depend upon the attitudes of the people; that there are fundamental attitudes, fundamental interests, fundamental purposes of the people of the United States, 150 million of them, and of the peoples of Asia, unnumbered millions, which determine and out of which grow the relations of our countries and the policies of our governments. Out of these attitudes and interests and purposes grow what we do from day to day.

Now, let's dispose of one idea right at the start and not bother with it any more. That is the policies of the United States are determined out of abstract principles in the Department of State or in the White House or in the Congress. That is not the case. If these policies are



going to be good, they must grow out of the fundamental attitudes of our people on both sides. If they are to be effective, they must become articulate through all the institutions of our national life, of which this is one of the greatest -- through the press, through the radio, through the churches, through the labor unions, through the business organizations, through all the groupings of our national life, there must become articulate the attitudes of our people and the policies which we propose to follow. It seems to me that understanding is the beginning of wisdom and therefore, we shall begin by trying to understand before we announce what we are going to do, and that is a proposition so heretical in this town that I advance it with some hesitation.

Now, let's consider some of the basic factors which go into the making of the attitudes of the peoples on both sides. I am frequently asked: Has the State Department got an Asian policy? And it seems to me that that discloses such a depth of ignorance that it is very hard to begin to deal with it. The peoples of Asia are so incredibly diverse and their problems are so incredibly diverse that how could anyone, even the most utter charlaton believe that he had a uniform policy which would deal with all of them. On the other hand, there are very important similarities in ideas and in problems among the peoples of Asia and so what we come to, after we understand these diversities and these common attitudes of mind, is the fact that there must be



certain similarities of approach, and there must be very great dissimilarities in action.

### Emerging Independence

Let's come now to the matters which Asia has in common. There is in this vast area what we might call a developing Asian consciousness, and a developing pattern, and this, I think, is based upon two factors which are pretty nearly common to the entire experience of all these Asian people.

One of these factors is a revulsion against the acceptance of misery and poverty as the normal condition of life. Throughout all of this vast area, you have that fundamental revolutionary aspect in mind and belief. The other common aspect that they have is the revulsion against foreign domination. Whether that foreign domination takes the form of colonialism or whether it takes the form of imperialism, they are through with it. They have had enough of it, and they want no more.

These two basic ideas which are held so broadly and commonly in Asia tend to fuse in the minds of many Asian peoples and many of them tend to believe that if you could get rid of foreign domination, if you could gain independence, then the relief from poverty and misery would follow almost in course. It is easy to point out that that is not true, and of course, they are discovering that it is not true. But underneath that belief, there was a very profound





understanding of a basic truth and it is the basic truth which underlies all our democratic belief and all our democratic concept. That truth is that just as no man and no government is wise enough or disinterested enough to direct the thinking and the action of another individual, so no nation and no people are wise enough and disinterested enough very long to assume the responsibility for another people or to control another people's opportunities.

That great truth they have sensed, and on that great truth they are acting. They say and they believe that from now on they are on their own. They will make their own decisions. They will attempt to better their own lot, and on occasion they will make their own mistakes. But it will be their mistakes, and they are not going to have their mistakes dictated to them by anybody else.

The symbol of these concepts has become nationalism. National independence has become the symbol both of freedom from foreign domination and freedom from the tyranny of poverty and misery.

### The Factor of Communism

Now, I stress this, which you may think is a platitude, because of a very important fact: I hear almost every day someone say that the real interest of the United States is to stop the spread of communism. Nothing seems to me to put the cart before the horse more completely than that. Of



course we are interested for a far deeper reason than any conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. We are interested in stopping the spread of communism because communism is a doctrine that we don't happen to like. Communism is the most subtle instrument of Soviet foreign policy that has ever been devised, and it is really the spearhead of Russian imperialism which would, if it could, take from these people what they have won, what we want them to keep and develop, which is their own national independence, their own individual independence, their own development of their own resources for their own good and not as mere tributary states to this great Soviet Union.

#### Military Security in the Pacific

Now, let's in the light of that consider some of these policies. First of all, let's deal with the question of military security. I deal with it first because it is important and because, having stated our policy in that regard, we must clearly understand that the military menace is not the most immediate.

What is the situation in regard to the military security of the Pacific area, and what is our policy in regard to it?

In the first place, the defeat and the disarmament of Japan has placed upon the United States the necessity of assuming the military defense of Japan so long as that is required, both in the interest of our security and in the



interests of the security of the entire Pacific area and, in all honor, in the interest of Japanese security. We have American - and there are Australian - troops in Japan. I am not in a position to speak for the Australians, but I can assure you that there is no intention of any sort of abandoning or weakening the defenses of Japan and that whatever arrangements are to be made either through permanent settlement or otherwise, that defense must and shall be maintained.

This defensive perimeter runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus. We hold important defense positions in the Ryukyu Islands, and those we will continue to hold. In the interest of the population of the Ryukyu Islands, we will at an appropriate time offer to hold these islands under trusteeship of the United Nations. But they are essential parts of the defensive perimeter of the Pacific, and they must and will be held.

The defensive perimeter runs from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands. Our relations, our defensive relations with the Philippines are contained in agreements between us. Those agreements are being loyally carried out and will be loyally carried out. Both peoples have learned by bitter experience the vital connections between our mutual defense requirements. We are in no doubt about that, and it is hardly necessary for me to say an attack on the Philippines



could not and would not be tolerated by the United States. But I hasten to add that no one perceives the imminence of any such attack.

So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack. But it must also be clear that such a guarantee is hardly sensible or necessary within the realm of practical relationship.

Should such an attack occur - one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from - the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression. But it is a mistake, I think, in considering Pacific and Far Eastern problems to become obsessed with military considerations. Important as they are, there are other problems that press, and these other problems are not capable of solution through military means. These other problems arise out of the susceptibility of many areas, and many countries in the Pacific area, to subversion and penetration. That cannot be stopped by military means.

#### Limitations of U.S. Assistance

That leads me to the other thing that I wanted to point out, and that is the limitation of effective American







assistance. American assistance can be effective when it is the missing component in a situation which might otherwise be solved. The United States cannot furnish all these components to solve the question. It cannot furnish determination, it cannot furnish the will, and it cannot furnish the loyalty of a people to its government. But if the will and if the determination exists and if the people are behind their government, then, and not always then, is there a very good chance. In that situation, American help can be effective and it can lead to an accomplishment which could not otherwise be achieved.

(Korea)--In Korea, we have taken great steps which have ended our military occupation, and in cooperation with the United Nations, have established an independent and sovereign country recognized by nearly all the rest of the world. We have given that nation great help in getting itself established. We are asking the Congress to continue that help until it is firmly established, and that legislation is now pending before the Congress. The idea that we should scrap all of that, that we should stop half way through the achievement of the establishment of this country, seems to me to be the most utter defeatism and utter madness in our interests in Asia. But there our responsibilities are more direct and our opportunities more clear. When you move to the south, you find that our opportunity is much slighter and that our responsibilities,



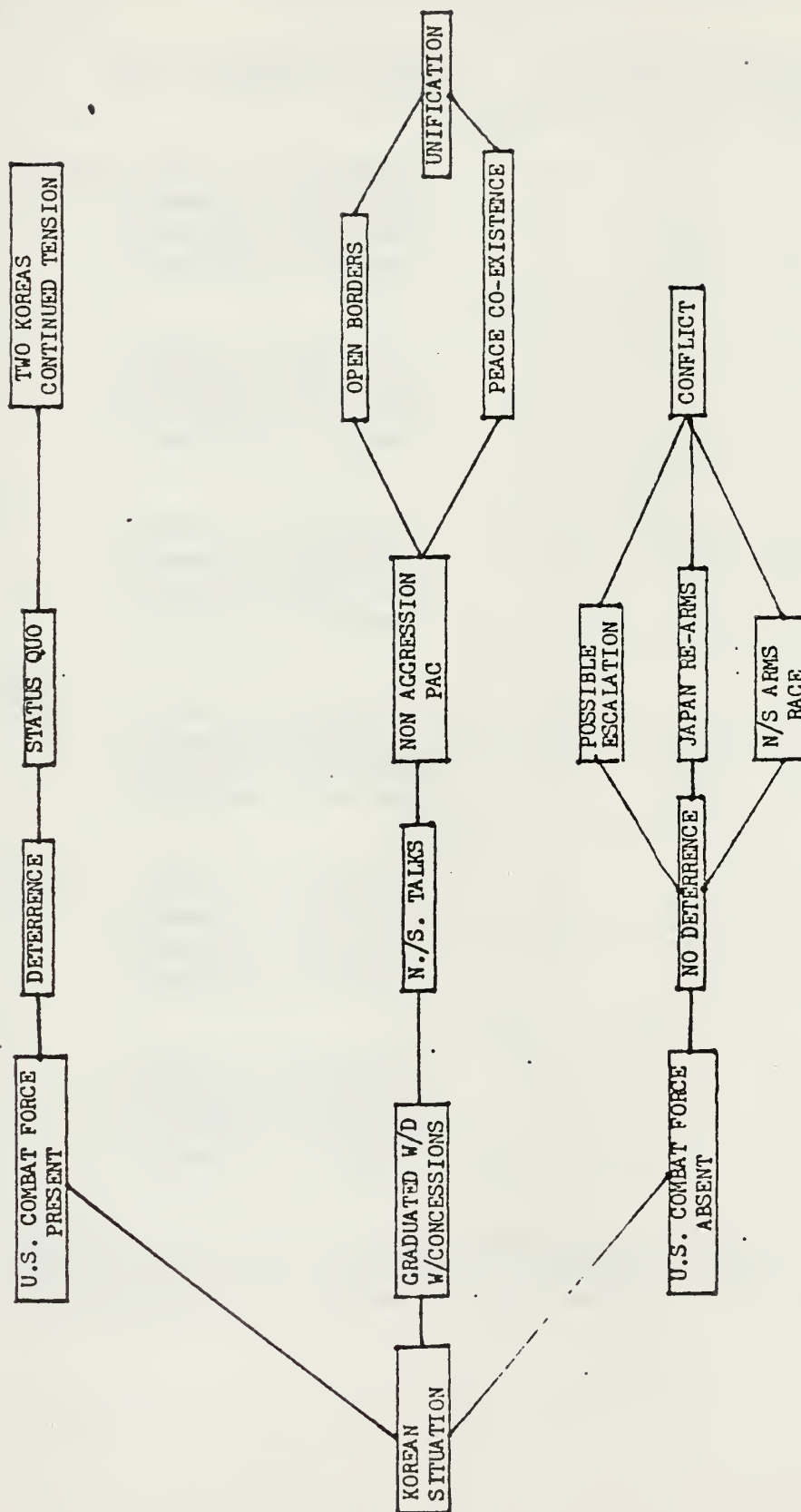
except in the Philippines and there indirectly, are very small. Those problems are very confusing.

### The New Day for Asia

So after this survey, what we conclude, I believe, is that there is a new day which has dawned in Asia. It is a day in which the Asian peoples are on their own, and know it, and intend to continue on their own. It is a day in which the old relationships between east and west are gone, relationships which at their worst were exploitation, and which at their best were paternalism. That relationship is over, and the relationship of east and west must now be in the Far East one of mutual respect and mutual helpfulness. We are their friends. Others are their friends. We and those others are willing to help, but we can help only where we are wanted and only where the conditions of help are really sensible and possible. So what we can see is that this new day in Asia, this new day which is dawning, may go on to a glorious noon or it may darken and it may drizzle out. But that decision lies within the countries of Asia and within the power of the Asian people. It is not a decision which a friend or even an enemy from the outside can decide for them.



# Possible Outcomes



Appendix 5



## Appendix #6

Identification of basic national interests among the different nations in Northeast Asia:

		<u>Basic Interest at Stake</u>	<u>Intensity of Interest</u>			
			Survival	Vital	Major	Peripheral
Case #1						
(United States)	Defense of homeland	...	...	...	X	
	Economic well-being	...	...	X	...	
	Favorable world order	...	X	...	...	
	Promotion of values	...	X	...	...	
Case #2						
(Russia)	Defense of homeland	...	X	...	...	
	Economic well-being	...	...	X	...	
	Favorable world order	...	X	...	...	
	Promotion of values	...	X	...	...	
Case #3						
(China)	Defense of homeland	...	X	...	...	
	Economic well-being	...	X	...	...	
	Favorable world order	...	...	X	...	
	Promotion of values	...	X	...	...	
Case #4						
(North Korea)	Defense of homeland	X	...	...	...	
	Economic well-being	X	...	...	...	
	Favorable world order	...	X	...	...	
	Promotion of values	...	X	...	...	
Case #5						
(South Korea)	Defense of homeland	X	...	...	...	
	Economic well-being	X	...	...	...	
	Favorable world order	...	X	...	...	
	Promotion of values	...	X	...	...	
Case #6						
(Japan)	Defense of homeland	...	...	X	...	
	Economic well-being	...	...	X	...	
	Favorable world order	...	...	X	...	
	Promotion of values	...	...	X	...	

A quick and dirty analysis using Nuechterlein's National-Interest matrix reveals that the U.S. has the least interests of all the nations involved and therefore, would show the least resolve in the long-run.





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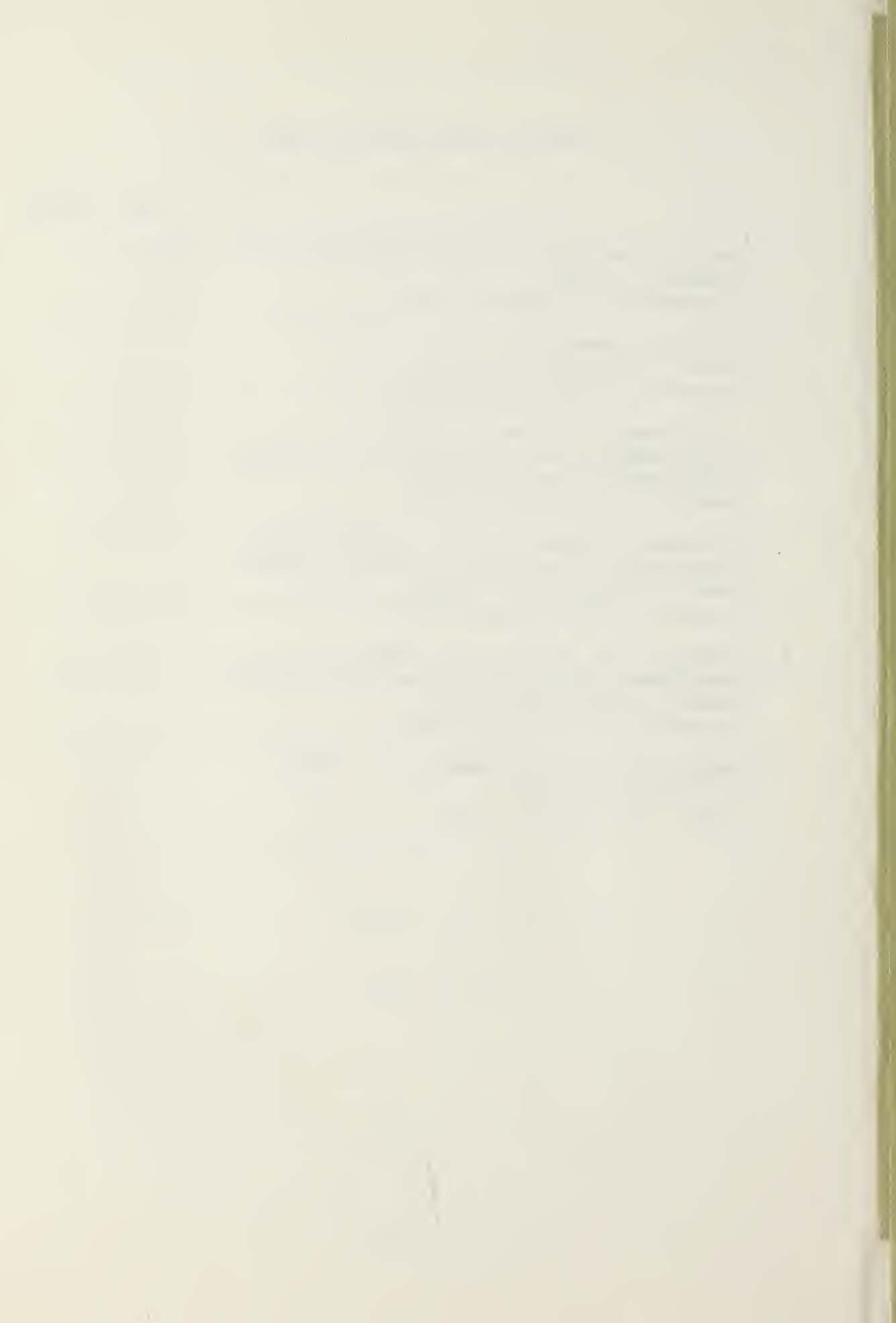


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